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**Blood, Bones, and Gold:  
Rewriting Relics in Medieval French Verse  
Saints' Lives 1150-1300**

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree of  
Doctor in Philosophy in French Studies

University of Warwick, School of Modern Languages and Cultures  
(French)

August 2019

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## **Acknowledgements**

Thanks are owed first and foremost to my supervisor, Emma Campbell, for her rigorous intellectual guidance, eternal patience, and moral support. This thesis would absolutely not have been possible without her feedback and encouragement. On a practical level, this thesis was made possible by a scholarship from the Wolfson Foundation, for which I thank them. I am grateful for support from colleagues in the French Department at Warwick, and in particular the Warwick medievalists for fostering a friendly and encouraging environment. Huge thanks go to my friends at Warwick for keeping me going, especially Louise, Liam, Merryn, Holly, Alex, Rebecca, Rebekah, and Matt. Last but not least, thanks to my parents and Lydia for their unfailing support and essential supplies of tea and cake.

## **Declaration**

I declare that no material contained in this thesis has been used or published before. This thesis is my own work, and has not been submitted for a degree at another university.

## Abstract

This thesis examines relics in a selection of hagiography composed *c.* 1150-1300 in Anglo-Norman and continental French verse. As the first full-length study devoted to relics in French hagiography, it demonstrates this corpus's importance for the study of medieval relic encounters. Drawing on a selection of modern critical approaches to materiality, particularly Bruno Latour's Actor-Network-Theory, the thesis examines both relics and hagiography in terms of heterogeneous networks that weave connections between entities of all kinds, in which all entities, not only human subjects, have the capacity for agency. It argues that relics are a useful means of exploring nonhuman agency in the Middle Ages, as they forge connections and trouble distinctions between texts, people, things, and the divine. It also argues that focusing on relics offers new understandings of how hagiography is built on networks that range beyond texts and human subjects to encompass bodies, things, spaces, and temporalities.

The thesis considers texts alongside visual and material elements such as manuscripts, architecture, and reliquaries. Each chapter is a case study of a particular saint's networks that explores different aspects of relic and hagiographic networks. Chapter One argues that Eloi of Noyon's collection of relics communicates his sainthood through forging broad networks connecting him with sacred bodies, places, and things. Chapter Two argues that Audrey of Ely and Edward the Confessor's incorrupt relics make visible networks forged through less tangible connections such as vision, desire, and knowledge. Chapter Three argues that Thomas Becket's blood relics (and their representations in text, image, and artefacts) forge extended networks of sacred spaces and renegotiate bodily boundaries. Chapter Four argues that despite the Virgin Mary's absence of corporeal relics, her contact relics and other substitutes repeatedly make her present on earth through a network of bodies, artefacts, and texts.

## Abbreviations

<i>AND</i>	<i>The Anglo-Norman Dictionary</i> Online Edition < <a href="http://www.anglo-norman.net/">http://www.anglo-norman.net/</a> > [accessed 15 August 2019]
<i>Arras</i>	Gautier de Coinci, II Mir 27 <i>D'une fame qui fu garie a Arras</i> , in <i>Les Miracles de Nostre Dame</i>
<i>Audree</i>	Marie, <i>The Life of Saint Audrey: A Text by Marie De France</i> , ed. by June Hall McCash and Judith Clark Barban (Jefferson: McFarland, 2006)
<i>Becket</i>	Beneit de Saint Alban, <i>La Vie de Thomas Becket par Beneit: poème anglo-normande du xii<sup>e</sup> siècle</i> , ed. by Börje Schlyter (Lund: Gleerup & Munksgaard, 1941)
<i>Doutance</i>	Gautier de Coinci, II Doutance 34 <i>De la misere d'omme et de fame et de la doutance qu'on doit avoir de morir</i> , in <i>Les Miracles de Nostre Dame</i>
<i>Edouard</i>	Nun of Barking, <i>La Vie d'Edouard le Confesseur: poème anglo-normand du xii<sup>e</sup> siècle</i> , ed. by Östen Södergård (Uppsala: 1948)
<i>Elois</i>	<i>Les Miracles de saint Eloi: Li Miracles de mesires sains Elois</i> , ed. by Achille Peigné-Delacourt, <i>Mémoires de la Société académique d'archéologie, sciences et arts du département de l'Oise</i> , 4 (1859), 1-128
<i>Enquête</i>	Bruno Latour, <i>Enquête sur les modes d'existence: une anthropologie des Modernes</i> (Paris: La Découverte, 2012)
<i>Estoire</i>	Matthew Paris, <i>La Estoire de seint Aedward le rei</i> , ed. by Kathryn Young Wallace (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1983)
<i>Fiertre</i>	Gautier de Coinci, II Mir 16 <i>Comment la fiertre fu boutee hors de l'eglyse</i> , in <i>Les Miracles de Nostre Dame</i>
<i>Fleuve</i>	Gautier de Coinci, I Mir 42 <i>D'un moigne qui fu ou fleuve</i> , in <i>Les Miracles de Nostre Dame</i>
<i>Foy</i>	Simon de Walsingham, 'Vie anglo-normande de sainte Foy par Simon de Walsingham', ed. by A. T. Baker, <i>Romania</i> , 66 (1940-41), 49-84
<i>Gondree</i>	Gautier de Coinci, II Mir 24 <i>De Gondree, comment Nostre Dame li</i>

- rendi son nez*, in *Les Miracles de Nostre Dame*
- Horsfevre* Gautier de Coinci, II Mir 14 *Comment li horsfevres fu renluminez*, in *Les Miracles de Nostre Dame*
- Leochade* Gautier de Coinci, I Mir 44 *Comment sainte Leochade fu perdue*, in *Les Miracles de Nostre Dame*
- Marcheans* Gautier de Coinci, II Mir 15 *Des marcheans qui offrirent a Nostre Dame deniers et puis li tolrent*, in *Les Miracles de Nostre Dame*
- Loon* Gautier de Coinci, II Mir 26 *D'une fame qui fu delivree a Loon dou feu*, in *Les Miracles de Nostre Dame*
- Miracles* Gautier de Coinci, *Les Miracles de Nostre Dame*, ed. by V. Frédéric Koenig, 4 vols (Geneva: Droz, 1955-70)
- Martin* Péan Gatineau, *Leben und Wunderthaten des Heiligen Martin*, ed. by Werner Söderhjelm (Tübingen: Litterarischer Verein in Stuttgart, 1896)
- Moustiers* Gautier de Coinci, II Mir 17 *Comment li moustiers et toute la vile fu ars par un dragon*, in *Les Miracles de Nostre Dame*
- Piet* Gautier de Coinci, II Mir 25 *Comment nostre dame rendi un homme le piet*, in *Les Miracles de Nostre Dame*
- Quentin* Huon le Roi de Cambrai, *La Vie de saint Quentin*, ed. by Arthur Långfors and Werner Söderhjelm, Acta Societatis Scientiarum Fennicae, 38 (Helsinki: Imprimerie de la Société de littérature finnoise, 1909)
- Tholete* Gautier de Coinci, I Mir 11 *D'un archevesque qui fu a Tholete*, in *Les Miracles de Nostre Dame*
- Thomas* Guernes de Pont-Sainte-Maxence, *La Vie de saint Thomas de Canterbury*, ed. by Jacques T. E. Thomas, 2 vols (Louvain: Peeters, 2002), I (2002)
- Salus* Gautier de Coinci, II Sal 35 *Des salus Nostre Dame*, in *Les Miracles de Nostre Dame*
- Sardanei* Gautier de Coinci, II Mir 30 *De l'ymage Nostre Dame de Sardanei*, in *Les Miracles de Nostre Dame*
- Soller* Gautier de Coinci, II Mir 23 *Item dou soller*, in *Les Miracles de Nostre Dame*

## Introduction

Li evesque de la cité,  
 [...]

Prist le seint cors de seinte Fey  
 Si le mist tres bele par sey  
 En suburbe de la cité  
 U il aveit edifié  
 Une eglise mut riche e bele  
 En le honur de la pucele,  
 Seinte Fey la bonëurée  
 Ke tant en cel est honorée.  
 Dunt Jhesu par la sue amur  
 Musta ses vertuz checun jur  
 A ceus k'urent mester d'aïe  
 De checune maladie,  
 De cors, de membres et de veue,  
 [...]

Pur seinte Fey la Deu amie.

(Simon de Walsingham, *La Vie de seinte Foy*, lines 897-914)<sup>1</sup>

At the site of Saint Foy's holy body ('le seint cors de seinte Fey'), enshrined with honour in a beautiful, opulent setting ('Une eglise mut riche e bele'), the Christian faithful are cured of all ills in their bodies, limbs, and vision (910-11). In a few short lines, this passage from Simon de Walsingham's early thirteenth-century Anglo-Norman life of Foy sketches the essential contours of the cult of saintly relics as it is depicted in medieval vernacular hagiography.<sup>2</sup> Simon emphasises the continuity between the living saint and her bodily remains, which are enshrined in her honour as a point of contact with Foy's person after her death (904-06). The focus on the beauty of the church in which the relics lie (903) suggests the importance of creative, aesthetic, and architectural responses to the saintly body, responses that further

<sup>1</sup> Simon de Walsingham, 'Vie anglo-normande de sainte Foy par Simon de Walsingham', ed. by A. T. Baker, *Romania*, 66 (1940-41), 49-84.

<sup>2</sup> Baker dates Simon's text to 1210-16, see *Foy*, p. 57.



enhance and communicate its sainthood. In turn, the building work undertaken by the local bishop (897-903) foregrounds the ways that the treatment of relics incorporates human agency into a saint's cult. Yet Foy's corpse is not an inert object acted on by human subjects, but rather a lively site of healing miracles that produce concrete transformations in the faithful's bodies (910-13). These miracles are performed in Foy's name ('Pur seinte Fey' (914)), suggesting the ways relics act as dynamic agents of the saint's will, while also indicating God's omnipresence as ultimate source of sacred activity, as Christ generates miracles to demonstrate his love for Foy (907-08). In this passage, Foy's relics present the reader with a complexly entangled gathering of material objects, bodies, and agencies: the artistic, architectural productions housing the relic; bodies dead and living, human and saintly; the agencies of the saint, the divine, and the ordinary faithful; and indeed the vernacular poetry of the text itself. The focus of this thesis is precisely this entanglement of creative production, materiality, and sacrality that the relic invokes, as it is negotiated by verse saints' lives produced in French in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. I contend that thinking about hagiography in these terms offers new understandings of how the genre is built on networks that operate through but that also range beyond texts, to encompass bodies, things, spaces, and temporalities.

My project investigates how thinking about interactions between relics and texts offers an alternative vantage on questions of textual representation, the sacred, and the material world. The thesis puts medieval hagiography in dialogue with a range of modern and contemporary thinkers who, in a variety of ways, advocate for paying attention to *things* as dynamic agents, with a view to breaking down distinctions between active human subjects and an inert nonhuman material world. Key figures in developing this approach to the agency of things include Jane Bennett, Bill Brown, and Bruno Latour; I engage with their work, most especially that of Latour, throughout my project.<sup>3</sup> I examine how depictions of relics and associated sacred artefacts in a range of hagiographic texts envisage a material world populated by human and nonhuman entities alike that communicate, incarnate, and provide access to the sacred. In narratives about relics, I argue, questions about how

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<sup>3</sup> The key works are Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010); Bill Brown, 'Thing Theory', *Critical Inquiry*, 28 (2001), 1-16; Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), and *Enquête sur les modes d'existence: une anthropologie des Modernes* (Paris: La Découverte, 2012).

the faithful Christian can encounter the sacred in the world depend upon forms of contact with diverse entities: saints, corpses, body parts, blood, reliquaries, shrines, churches, pilgrim souvenirs, manuscripts, illuminations, texts, other believers. Moreover, focusing on relics highlights that designations such as bodily, sacred, material, and textual are not separate categories, but profoundly porous and interconnected.

I explore this potential for contact and connections between entities of all kinds (human and nonhuman, sacred and nonsacred, textual and material) through the figure of the network. In Latour's account, networks describe the heterogeneous material-semiotic connections that link, produce, and transform entities of all kinds.<sup>4</sup> Networks describe an essentially flat ontology that decentres the human: nonhuman elements as well as human subjects have the capacity for agency; material things as well as linguistic texts trace relationships and produce meaning.<sup>5</sup> The model of relationality proposed by Latour is not bound by physical proximity: networks trace connections across scales and distances; an entity can be physically distant and yet made intimately present and proximate through its connections.<sup>6</sup> Building on Latour's theoretical work, I consider how thinking in terms of networks – that is, in terms of connections, nonhuman agency, materiality, proximity – illuminates our understanding of hagiography as a form of sacred encounter.<sup>7</sup>

From Latour's perspective, everything is – or has the potential to be – networked. In order to be understood as sacred, I argue, relics, often display their networked quality in tangible, visible, or otherwise intelligible ways. Moreover, relics are rich sources of information about the polyvalent agency of matter in the Middle Ages. As I will argue, relics call into question the separation of humans from the material and divine worlds, and trouble clean distinctions between textual and material objects. Thus relics are a productive starting point for exploring material-semiotic networks that interlace the mundane and the spiritual. This investigation's aim is not to produce a survey of relic veneration or vernacular writing about relics.

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<sup>4</sup> Latour, 'On Actor-Network Theory: A Few Clarifications', *Soziale Welt*, 47 (1996), 369-81 (p. 375); see also John Law, 'Actor Network Theory and Material Semiotics', in *The New Blackwell Companion to Social Theory*, ed. by Bryan S. Turner (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), pp. 141-58 (pp. 141-42).

<sup>5</sup> Latour, 'On Actor-Network Theory', p. 375.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 371.

<sup>7</sup> For detailed discussion of my formulation of Latourian networks, see below, pp. 29-45, and Chapter One, pp. 61-76.

Rather, in order to attend to the particular networks in which individual texts are embedded, each chapter takes the form of a detailed case study of an individual text, interwoven with discussion of visual and material aspects of a text's manuscript context and the saint's broader material cult. This enables me to consider how the text was experienced as part of a network of material artefacts that communicated the saint, granting agency to the full range of material entities.

Using relics as a starting point, then, encourages new ways of thinking about medieval hagiography which shift the focus away from questions of reading and textual representation. Instead, my focus is on tracing networks that extend beyond texts, in which all participants, linguistic and nonlinguistic, human and nonhuman, shape and define each other through their connections. From Latour's perspective, human subjects and linguistic texts are no longer the privileged or exclusive site of agency, of the capacity to forge relationships and produce meaning. Thus thinking with networks focuses attention on the ways in which hagiographic texts are simultaneously constituted by, entangled in, and active producers of networks that incorporate nonhuman things as well as human subjects. Moreover, I argue, the networks of hagiography extend across what we might think of as boundaries separating what is accessible and what is absent, distant, or intangible: past temporalities; distant earthly as well as heavenly spaces; divine and saintly power; enclosed and inaccessible bodies and artefacts. In other words, I ask how the texts I study are engaged not only in describing sacred bodies and artefacts, but in making present through their networked connections forms of sacred contact, proximity, and agency.

## **Relics**

Relics were an omnipresent feature of medieval Christian society: concealed in every altar, displayed in elaborate containers in every church, the focal point of pilgrimages and feast days. Their presence extended far beyond ecclesiastical institutions: relics were processed through civic space, worn on the body, used to swear legal oaths, and exchanged between religious and secular leaders as

demonstrations of spiritual and political influence.<sup>8</sup> Likewise, although relic cults were often administered by elite male religious establishments, they reached all sections of society, resisting strict distinctions between lay and religious culture, ‘popular’ and elite religion, men and women’s devotions.<sup>9</sup> Christian veneration of body parts and other artefacts associated with saints stretches back to the second century.<sup>10</sup> The development of relic cults and the theological debates surrounding them from late antiquity onwards have been extensively studied by historians, and need not be repeated here.<sup>11</sup> Rather, in this section, I briefly survey significant developments in the theory and practice of relic veneration in the period c. 1150-c. 1300 that this thesis examines.

This period is notable for its paucity of new theoretical writing on relics. Two treatises dedicated to the cult of relics and the legitimacy of relic veneration were

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<sup>8</sup> On relic processions, see Cynthia Hahn, ‘Theatricality, Materiality, Relics: Reliquary Forms and the Sensational in Mosan Art’, in *Sensory Reflections: Traces of Experience in Medieval Artifacts*, ed. by Fiona Griffiths and Kathryn Starkey (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2018), pp. 142-62 (pp. 146-48, 154-155). On relics worn as personal ornaments, Peter A. Newton, ‘Some New Material for the Study of the Iconography of St Thomas Becket’, in *Thomas Becket: actes du Colloque international de Sédieres, 19-24 août 1973*, ed. by Raymond Foreville (Paris: Ed. Beauchesnes, 1975), pp. 255-63 (pp. 260-61); Henk van Os, *The Way to Heaven: Relic Veneration in the Middle Ages* (Baarn: De Prom, 2001), p. 61. On relic oaths, Nicole Herrmann-Mascard, *Les Reliques des saints: formation coutumière d’un droit* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1975), pp. 235-36, 245. On relic exchanges, Charles Freeman, *Holy Bones, Holy Dust: How Relics Shaped the History of Medieval Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), pp. 26-27, 73-75.

<sup>9</sup> On the way relic cults demonstrate the lack of separation between ‘popular’ and ‘elite’ religion, see Amy G. Remensnyder, ‘Un problème de cultures ou de culture? La statue-reliquaire et les *joca* de sainte Foy de Conques dans le *Liber miraculorum* de Bernard d’Angers’, *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale*, 33 (1990), 351-79 (pp. 354, 379); and Julia M. H. Smith, ‘Oral and Written: Saints, Miracles, and Relics in Brittany, c. 850-1250’, *Speculum*, 65 (1990), 309-43 (pp. 310-11). On differences in men and women’s relic devotions, see Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg, ‘Women’s Monasteries and Sacred Space: The Promotion of Saints’ Cults and Miracles’, in *Gender and Christianity in Medieval Europe: New Perspectives*, ed. by Lisa M. Bitel and Felice Lifshitz (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), pp. 68-86.

<sup>10</sup> The second-century Greek *Martyrdom of St Polycarp* describes the collection and entombment of the martyr’s bones: ‘collecting the remains that were dearer to us than precious stones and finer than gold, we buried them in a fitting spot’ (Chapter 18, pp. 16-17), in *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, ed. and trans. by Herbert Musurillo (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), pp. 2-21.

<sup>11</sup> Peter Brown traces the early development of the cult of relics, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981). Patrick J. Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), and Herrmann-Mascard give historical accounts of developments in the central Middle Ages. Jonathan Sumption gives an overview of the written theories of relics from Late Antiquity through the Middle Ages, *Pilgrimage: An Image of Mediaeval Religion* (London: Faber and Faber, 1975; repr. 2002), pp. 22-24.

produced by Thiofrid of Echternach and Guibert de Nogent at the beginning of the twelfth century.<sup>12</sup> There appear to have been no subsequent substantial theorisations of relics until Thomas Aquinas discussed them as part of his comprehensive *Summa theologiae* (1265-74).<sup>13</sup> Aquinas summarises and affirms the long-established tenets of relic veneration. He asserts that relics are worthy of veneration and capable of intercession because of the connections to saints they continue to embody and because they lead the venerator to God: God works miracles through saintly relics and relic veneration is a means of honouring God.<sup>14</sup> Here Aquinas reiterates – as does nearly all medieval writing about relics – dominant views set out by early church figures such as Victricius of Rouen (writing c. 396), Jerome (406), and Augustine (c. 410).<sup>15</sup> As exemplified by the *Summa*, medieval theological and theoretical views on relics remain relatively stable throughout the period.

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<sup>12</sup> Thiofrid of Echternach (c. 1100) reflected extensively on the typology and nature of relics, and their relationships to the reliquaries that contained them, see *Flores epytaphii sanctorum*, ed. by M. C. Ferrari, *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis*, 133 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996). Thiofrid's text survives in two manuscripts produced at Echternach, see Michele Camillo Ferrari, 'Lemmata sanctorum: Thiofrid d'Echternach et le discours sur les reliques au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle', *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale*, 38 (1995) 215-25 (pp. 215-16). In the first decades of the twelfth century, Guibert de Nogent produced a scathing critique of some of the excesses of relic veneration, taking aim at the trade and veneration of inauthentic relics, see *De pignoribus sanctorum*, in *Opera varia*, ed. by R. B. C. Huygens, *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis*, 127 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1993), pp. 79-175. This sort of criticism is rare for the Middle Ages; Guibert's text survives in only one manuscript, and does not appear to have been influential on medieval thought. See Henri Platelle, 'Guibert de Nogent et le *De pignoribus sanctorum*: richesses et limites d'une critique médiévale des reliques', in *Les Reliques: objets, cultes, symboles; actes du colloque international de l'Université du Littoral-Côte d'Opale (Boulogne-sur-Mer), 4-6 septembre 1997*, ed. by Edina Bozóky and Anne-Marie Helvétius (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), pp. 109-21 (pp. 113-14).

<sup>13</sup> For the *Summa*'s dates and use for the instruction of theology, see Denys Turner, *Thomas Aquinas: A Portrait* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), pp. 25-26.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, ed. and trans. by Thomas Gilby and others (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1964-76), I: *The One Mediator* (3a. 16-26), ed. and trans. by Colman E. O'Neill (1965), III. 25. 6.

<sup>15</sup> Victricius of Rouen, *De laude sanctorum*, *Patrologia Latina*, 20 (1845), cols 443-58 (see especially Chapters 8, 10-11, cols 450-54). For *De laude*'s dates, see Gillian Clark, 'Victricius of Rouen: Praising the Saints', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 7. 3 (1999), 365-99 (p. 366). Jerome, *Contra Vigilantium*, *Patrologia Latina*, 23 (1845), cols 339-52 (see Chapters 5-6, 8, cols 343-47). For this letter's date, see Jerome, *Against Vigilantius*, in *Letters and Select Works*, trans. by W. H. Fremantle, G. Lewis, and W. G. Martley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1892; repr. 1979), pp. 783-94 (p. 784). Augustine of Hippo, *De civitate Dei*, ed. and trans. by George E. McCracken and others, 7 vols (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957-72), VII: *Books 21-22*, ed. and trans. by William M. Green (1972) (Book XXII Chapters 8-9, pp. 242-43, 250-53). On medieval recapitulations of earlier views on relics, see Sumption, p. 23.

In contrast to the stability of theological reflection on relics, the period 1150-1300 saw significant transformations in the practices of relic veneration. The sack of Constantinople in 1204 during the Fourth Crusade led to an influx into western Europe of relics associated with the Holy Land, the Virgin Mary, and Christ, prompting new artistic creations to contain these relics, as well as contributing to increased interest in the universal saints.<sup>16</sup> In 1215, the Fourth Lateran Council prohibited the display of relics outside of containing vessels, officially restricting the faithful's direct access to relics and emphasising the importance of mediating enclosures such as reliquaries and shrines.<sup>17</sup> As Nicole Herrmann-Mascard explores, the regulation of relic practice through canon law tied into increasing attempts to regulate sainthood more broadly during this period, such as the rise of official canonisations.<sup>18</sup>

The twelfth and thirteenth centuries were also a period of continuing innovation in the artistic responses to relics that guided the faithful's experiences. As art historical and architectural scholarship attests, relics continue to be transferred into newly crafted or refurbished containers in a wide variety of forms from crosses and transparent crystal vessels to those mimicking body parts, tombs, or churches.<sup>19</sup> These centuries also saw continued renovations of tombs, shrines, and religious architecture in England and France, motivated by a variety of factors: architectural trends, the need to facilitate or restrict pilgrims' access, political and institutional

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<sup>16</sup> On the impact of 1204 on western relic veneration, see Anne E. Lester, 'What Remains: Women, Relics and Remembrance in the Aftermath of the Fourth Crusade', in *Crusades and Memory: Rethinking Past and Present*, ed. by Megan Cassidy-Welch (London: Routledge, 2015), pp. 86-103 (pp. 87-88). On creation of new shrines and reliquaries post-1204, see Marie-Madeleine Gauthier, *Highways of the Faith: Relics and Reliquaries from Jerusalem to Compostela*, trans. by J. A. Underwood (Secaucus: Wellfleet Press, 1986), p. 74. On the Fourth Crusade's influence on the popularity of universal sanctity, Cynthia Hahn, *Strange Beauty: Issues in the Making and Meaning of Reliquaries, 400-circa 1204* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012), p. 231.

<sup>17</sup> Canon 62 'we ordain in the present decree that in the future old relics may not be exhibited outside of a vessel', edited and translated in H. J. Schroeder, *Disciplinary Decrees of the General Councils: Text, Translation and Commentary* (St. Louis: Herder, 1937), p. 286. Although as Herrmann-Mascard points out, this prohibition and other attempts to regulate relic use through canon law were not always strictly adhered to, pp. 214-16.

<sup>18</sup> Herrmann-Mascard, p. 101; Diana Webb, *Pilgrimage in Medieval England* (Hambledon: Carnegie, 2000), p. 35.

<sup>19</sup> For the developments in reliquary forms and functions 1150-1250, see Gauthier, *Highways of the Faith*, pp. 83-114; and for the period 1250-1350, pp. 115-48.

demands, as well as the saint's enhanced glory.<sup>20</sup> As Cynthia Hahn argues, although in theological terms holiness inhered directly in saints' bodies, the changing representational strategies of the reliquaries containing them had a profound impact on the ways in which the faithful understood and experienced the sacred.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, the relative absence of new theological reflection on relics does not indicate a lack of interest in writing about relics: the production of saints' lives concerned with relics, collections of miracles performed at relic shrines, as well as a host of other forms of writing such as feast day liturgies and relic-lists flourished.<sup>22</sup> These texts continued to reimagine the saints and relics they described to suit new spiritual and institutional demands.<sup>23</sup>

Relic veneration 1150-1300, then, as it was experienced in cult practice, regulated through canon law, presented in art and architecture, and reflected on in text, was characterised by both abiding continuity and frequent change. The twelfth and thirteenth centuries were broadly free from the theological anxieties of earlier and later periods about the legitimacy of venerating relics. Yet, on a granular level, artistic and architectural innovation, political and institutional exigencies, as well as developments in conceptions of sanctity continued to transform encounters between the Christian faithful and saintly relics. The study of relics offers a valuable glimpse into a range of medieval conceptions of shifting relationships between the stuff of

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<sup>20</sup> On developments in translations and enshrinement in France, see Pierre-André Sigal, 'Le Déroulement des translations de reliques principalement dans les régions entre Loire et Rhin aux XI<sup>e</sup> et XII<sup>e</sup> siècles', in *Les Reliques*, ed. by Bozóky and Helvétius, pp. 213-27 (p. 214); and in England, Ben Nilson, *Cathedral Shrines of Medieval England* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2001), pp. 45, 81. For an example of the political motivations for renovations, see Peter Draper, 'Bishop Northwold and the Cult of Saint Etheldreda', in *Medieval Art and Architecture at Ely Cathedral*, ed. by Nicola Coldstream and Peter Draper (London: British Archaeological Association, 1979), pp. 8-27 (p. 16).

<sup>21</sup> Hahn, *Strange Beauty*, pp. 6-9.

<sup>22</sup> On relationships between relics and hagiography in this period, see Thomas Head, *Hagiography and the Cult of Saints: The Diocese of Orléans, 800-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 14-17, 60, 66. On miracle collections, Rachel Koopmans, *Wonderful to Relate: Miracle Stories and Miracle Collecting in High Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), pp. 2-3. For saints' feast day and translation liturgies, see Stephen Wilson, 'Introduction', in *Saints and Their Cults: Studies in Religious Sociology, Folklore, and History*, ed. by Stephen Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 1-53 (p. 11). On relics and relic-lists, see Julian Luxford, 'The Nature and Purpose of Medieval Relic-Lists', in *Saints and Cults in Medieval England: Proceedings of the 2015 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. by Susan Powell (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2017), pp. 58-79.

<sup>23</sup> Barbara Abou-El-Haj, *The Medieval Cult of Saints: Formations and Transformations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 1-3.

the material world (things, places, bodies, texts) and the sacred. Moreover, while theory and practice are by no means separate categories, this overview points to the primacy of practice over theology in shaping medieval experiences of relics.<sup>24</sup> When it comes to medieval relics, the richest field of study is arguably offered not by theological doctrine but by the intermingling devotional practices, visual and material responses, and other forms of writing that spring up around relics, including the vernacular hagiography that forms the backbone of my project.

## Hagiography

Although there is a large body of scholarship on medieval relics, these studies focus on Latin or material sources; there has not yet been a full-length study dedicated to relics in medieval French texts.<sup>25</sup> This thesis addresses this gap in the scholarship. Throughout, I demonstrate that French hagiography offers fertile terrain for the study of relics and the ways they were experienced by medieval worshippers. While all the texts I study in this thesis are, at least in part, translations and adaptations from earlier Latin sources, they display a high degree of freedom from the sources they adapt. Vernacular verse saints' lives transform what they translate, utilising poetic forms that evoke new associations with vernacular genres such as *chansons de geste* and courtly romance and adapting their contents to new audiences and cultural contexts (widening access to the non-Latinate, to the laity, and to women, for example).<sup>26</sup> Thus although vernacular lives maintain significant connections to their Latin sources, they are worthy of study in their own right, offering new insights into the

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<sup>24</sup> Hahn, *Strange Beauty*, p. 11.

<sup>25</sup> There are several important studies dedicated to relics in Middle English literature, however, see Seeta Chaganti, *The Medieval Poetics of the Reliquary: Enshrinement, Inscription, Performance* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Robyn Malo, *Relics and Writing in Late Medieval England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013).

<sup>26</sup> See Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, Duncan Robertson, and Nancy Bradley Warren, 'Introduction', in *The Vernacular Spirit: Essays on Medieval Religious Literature*, ed. by Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, Duncan Robertson, and Nancy Bradley Warren (New York: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 1-11 (p. 2); Keith Busby, *Codex and Context: Reading Old French Verse Narrative in Manuscript*, 2 vols (Amsterdam: Rodopi: 2002), I (2002), p. 196; Brigitte Cazelles, *Le Corps de sainteté: d'après Jehan Bouche d'Or, Jehan Paulus et quelques vies des XII<sup>e</sup> et XIII<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Geneva: Droz, 1982), p. 192; and *The Lady as Saint: A Collection of French Hagiographic Romances of the Thirteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), pp. 7, 19; Simon Gaunt, *Gender and Genre in Medieval French Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 181.



ever evolving medieval cult of relics.<sup>27</sup> French hagiography's engagement with relics also raises questions that go beyond the history of religious practice. I seek to demonstrate that considering relics in this corpus – and, more precisely, the networks formed by and through relics – can also enrich our understanding of the way hagiography as a genre engages with questions of corporeality, materiality, sanctity, and textuality. I discuss the theoretical approach taken by this thesis, which is informed in particular by Latour's Actor-Network-Theory, in further detail in the following section. In this section, I briefly set out how thinking about hagiography in terms of heterogeneous networks that account for nonhuman agencies might intersect with or offer fresh perspectives on previous scholarship.

This thesis aims to think about hagiographic texts as part of an encounter with the sacred that ranges beyond purely literary representation to consider the embedded nature of texts in networks incorporating artefacts, places, and bodies. This focus is in dialogue with historicist scholarship that addresses the materiality and historical embeddedness of saints' lives. Of particular importance for this thesis is the work of Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, who traces the many historical relationships between patrons, composers, reading communities, and texts made visible through hagiography and its manuscripts, with a particular focus on sociological questions of readership and women's literary culture.<sup>28</sup> In addition to Wogan-Browne's work, there are a wealth of investigations into questions of hagiography's patronage and manuscript contexts that demonstrate how paying attention to a text's circumstances of composition and material form as recorded in the codex can highlight the intertextual, interpersonal, institutional, and geographic connections of vernacular hagiography.<sup>29</sup> More broadly, scholarship on hagiography frequently foregrounds the ways the genre forges connections between communities of people and the sacred. For example, taking an approach that addresses the theory as well as the practice of

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<sup>27</sup> Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture c. 1150-1300: Virginity and its Authorizations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 227.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10, 148-49, 151-55, 196.

<sup>29</sup> On patronage, see for example, Thomas O'Donnell, "'The ladies have made me quite fat': Authors and Patrons at Barking Abbey", in *Barking Abbey and Medieval Literary Culture: Authorship and Authority in a Female Community*, ed. by Jennifer N. Brown and Donna Alfano Bussell (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2012), pp. 94-114; Ian Short, 'The Patronage of Beneit's *Vie de Thomas Becket*', *Medium Aevum*, 56 (1987), 239-56. On manuscript-focused investigations of hagiography, see Pamela Gehrke, *Saints and Scribes: Medieval Hagiography in Its Manuscript Context* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Amy V. Ogden, *Hagiography, Romance and the 'Vie de sainte Eufrosine'* (Princeton: Edward C. Armstrong Monographs, 2003), pp. 24-39.

kinship and community, Emma Campbell explores how saints' lives encourage their readers to actively respond to the text and participate in communities of reading and worship, forging relationships between readers and saints, human and divine, past and present temporalities.<sup>30</sup> This thesis shares with these studies a focus on how saints' lives forge relationships that extend beyond the text, from their manuscript transmission to their communities of production and reception and to broader questions of how hagiography connects readers to the sacred. Yet my theoretical stance, informed by Actor-Network-Theory and a selection of other Object-Oriented theories, takes a different approach to the questions of hagiography's materiality and interconnectedness. The studies referenced above tend to focus on how examining, for example, a text's manuscript context or reading communities illuminates the relationships hagiography traces between human subjects and between texts. In contrast, from the outset my theoretical framework emphasises the importance of not only considering human subjectivity and textuality, but also thinking about how hagiography participates in networks that incorporate material, nonhuman artefacts and agencies.

In this, my work resonates to some extent with the focus of many historical studies which examine connections between (Latin) hagiography and what might be termed the 'material culture' of a saint's cult, that is artefacts such as shrines, reliquaries, buildings, and relics themselves. Patrick Geary's influential study of medieval relics, for example, argues that the composition of hagiography is intimately tied to relics' translations and the construction of material artefacts that communicate a saint's identity and power.<sup>31</sup> Again, however, the theoretical frame of the network focuses attention on the ways in which these artefacts are not – as historical accounts such as Geary's present them – inert tools of human subjects, but have agencies of their own.<sup>32</sup> I am interested in thinking about relics not as conduits, signs, or inert objects in need of external textual validation, but as entities with their own set of agencies. Thinking with network theories, this thesis argues, contributes

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<sup>30</sup> Emma Campbell, *Medieval Saints' Lives: The Gift, Kinship and Community in Old French Hagiography* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2008), pp. 8, 10; see also Gaunt, p. 183; Duncan Robertson, *The Medieval Saints' Lives: Spiritual Renewal and Old French Literature* (Lexington: French Forum, 1995), pp. 22, 212, 216.

<sup>31</sup> Geary, *Furta Sacra*, p. 11; see also Head, pp. 16, 60. Similarly, for discussion of how hagiography can illuminate the study of material artefacts such as reliquaries, see Hahn, *Strange Beauty*, pp. 31-40.

<sup>32</sup> Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, pp. 84-85.

to existing debates about hagiography's embedded nature, while decentring the role of human subjectivity to make room for a host of material agencies.

The value of studying French hagiography from an explicitly theoretical point of view has now been thoroughly demonstrated by a number of literary scholars. These studies likewise frequently share an anthropocentric focus, and have often particularly addressed questions of gender and sexuality.<sup>33</sup> Drawing on feminist and queer theories, scholars such as Simon Gaunt, Kathryn Gravdal, and Robert Mills, for example, have explored how hagiography depicts the sanctity of both male and female saints as bound up with the portrayal of their bodies as sexualised, in particular through the violations and exposures of martyrdom.<sup>34</sup> The potential eroticism of hagiographic depictions of exposed and martyred saintly bodies has been underlined in particular by Bill Burgwinkle and Cary Howie, who stress the desire saints' bodies provoke both within the text and in the reader to see and touch.<sup>35</sup> Mills and Sarah Salih also draw attention to the negotiation of sexuality in their respective discussions of how virgin saints can challenge 'binary gender and heterosexuality'.<sup>36</sup> My examination of the incorrupt relics of the chaste saints Audrey of Ely and Edward the Confessor in Chapter Two draws particularly on these theoretical discussions of gender and sexuality.<sup>37</sup> However, once again, by focusing on Object-Oriented theories, this thesis seeks to move away from the shared focus of

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<sup>33</sup> Several important studies also draw on psychoanalytic theories, for example Sarah Kay's discussion of Virgin Mary miracles, *Courtly Contradictions: The Emergence of the Literary Object in the Twelfth Century* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), pp. 181-98.

<sup>34</sup> Gaunt, pp. 185, 197; Kathryn Gravdal, *Ravishing Maidens: Writing Rape in Medieval French Literature and Law* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), p. 22; Robert Mills, "'Whatever you do is a delight to me!': Masculinity, Masochism, and Queer Play in Representations of Male Martyrdom", *Exemplaria*, 13, (2001), 1-37 (p. 7). See also Cazelles, *The Lady as Saint*, pp. 81-82; Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, 'Chaste Bodies: Frames and Experiences', in *Framing Medieval Bodies*, ed. by Kay and Rubin, pp. 24-42 (pp. 27-78).

<sup>35</sup> Bill Burgwinkle and Cary Howie, *Sanctity and Pornography in Medieval Culture: On the Verge* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), p. 8. See also Cary Howie, 'As the Saint Turns: Hagiography at the Threshold of the Visible', *Exemplaria*, 17 (2005), 317-46.

<sup>36</sup> Robert Mills, *Seeing Sodomy in the Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), p. 250; Sarah Salih, *Versions of Virginity in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2001), pp. 2, 8, 11. See also Emma Campbell, 'Separating the Saints From the Boys: Sainthood and Masculinity in the Old French *Vie de saint Alexis*', *French Studies*, 57 (2003), 447-62 (pp. 452-53); Gaunt, p. 186; Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, 'The Virgin's Tale', in *Feminist Readings in Middle English Literature: The Wife of Bath and All Her Sect*, ed. by Ruth Evans and Leslie Johnson (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 289-340 (p. 291).

<sup>37</sup> See especially pp. 140-43, 163-66.

these studies on human subjects to consider the role of nonhuman entities in the construction and communication of sainthood.

This thesis also shares with these theoretical studies a focus on bodies. As suggested above, previous scholarship has emphasised the role of the (gendered, sexualised, suffering) saintly body in attaining and broadcasting sanctity.<sup>38</sup> Likewise, the hagiography I examine foregrounds the importance of human bodies (those of the saints, of the faithful within the text, and of the text's readers) as sites of interface with the world and with the sacred. I draw here on a wealth of scholarship on the medieval body, in particular in relation to saints and the divine. As well as enabling personal contact with the sacred, human bodies can also themselves provide routes to sanctity or act as conduits for the manifestation of God's grace.<sup>39</sup> Of course 'the body' is not a historically stable category, and the bodies I examine are shaped by specific historical and cultural contexts as well as by their concrete corporeality.<sup>40</sup> For example, in addition to the culturally contingent constructions of gender discussed above, studies of hagiography such as that of Christopher Baswell have explored how the bodies of saints and supplicants alike are marked by disability in ways that are concretely corporeal as well as fluid, culturally constructed attributions rather than absolute categories.<sup>41</sup> More broadly, the human body is a powerful figure that articulates collective identities, symbolising institutional communities, kingdoms, the church, indeed the world.<sup>42</sup> Even the experience of bodily elements

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<sup>38</sup> Cazelles, in particular foregrounds the importance of corporeality in hagiography, *Le Corps de sainteté*, p. 8.

<sup>39</sup> Bill Burgwinkle, 'Medieval Somatics', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Body in Literature*, ed. by David Hillman and Ulrika Maude (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 10-23 (p. 12).

<sup>40</sup> Sarah Kay and Miri Rubin, 'Introduction', in *Framing Medieval Bodies*, ed. by Sarah Kay and Miri Rubin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), pp. 1-9 (p. 1); Curtis Perry, 'Introduction', in *Material Culture and Cultural Materialisms in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. by Curtis Perry (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001), pp. ix-xxiv (pp. xix-xx).

<sup>41</sup> Christopher Baswell, 'Disability Networks in the Campsey Manuscript', in *The French of Medieval England: Essays in Honour of Jocelyn Wogan-Brown*, ed. by Thelma Fenster and Carolyn P. Collette (Woodbridge: Brewer, 2017), pp. 157-74. See also Irina Metzler, *Disability in Medieval Europe: Thinking About Physical Impairment During the High Middle Ages, c. 1100-1400* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 126-82.

<sup>42</sup> On the body as figure for community, see Suzanne Conklin Akbari, and Jill Ross, 'Limits and Teleology: The Many Ends of the Body', in *The Ends of the Body: Identity and Community in Medieval Culture*, ed. by Suzanne Conklin Akbari and Jill Ross (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), pp. 3-21 (p. 3). On the body as microcosmic model of universe, see Monica H. Green, 'Introduction', in *A Cultural History of the Human Body in the Medieval Age*, ed. by Linda Kalof (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), pp. 1-16 (pp. 3-4). For

such as blood or skin may be inflected by medieval focuses on Christ's sacrificial Passion, or the nature of texts inscribed on animal skin.<sup>43</sup> While my discussion is invested in the body, I argue that viewing bodies from the vantage point of relics offers a different view of corporeality in saints' lives, complicating understandings of saintly bodies and the social communities in which they are embedded. On a basic level, I argue, relics – as whole corpse, fragmented body parts, or indeed nonhuman contact relics – have a complex relationship to corporeality: they are at once bodies, objects, people, and things.<sup>44</sup> Relics' potential for fragmentation in particular draws attention to the composite nature of bodies: throughout the thesis I pay attention to saintly and nonsaintly bodies as material entities embedded in networks of flesh, skin, bones, blood, hair, and so on, but also to the ways in which the materiality of human bodies might be supplemented by a range of nonhuman elements such as reliquaries and prostheses.<sup>45</sup> In contrast to much previous work, then, my discussion of saintly materiality is invested in the ways in which this materiality is not only about the human, living, gendered subject, but also about the nonhuman.

My focus on the (potentially nonhuman) materiality of saints and hagiography is also informed by a range of recent studies that emphasise how medieval manuscripts' material make-up can inflect reading experiences. Instrumental here is Sarah Kay's work on manuscript parchment. In particular, Kay's analysis of the flaying of Saint Bartholomew reflects on how the act of reading this saint's life on parchment pages made of flayed animal skins encourages contemplation of and proximity to the saint's skinned body.<sup>46</sup> Kay's work thus draws attention to the animal nonhuman aspects of medieval manuscripts; this thesis expands on this work to account for the agencies of other nonhuman manuscript

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discussion of the saint's body as figure for community and kingdom in the lives of Audrey of Ely and Edward the Confessor, see Chapter Two, pp. 147-49, 182-84.

<sup>43</sup> On blood, see for example Bettina Bildhauer, *Medieval Blood* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2006); Peggy McCracken, *The Curse of Eve, the Wound of the Hero: Blood, Gender, and Medieval Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), p. ix. On parchment as animal skin, see Sarah Kay, *Animal Skins and the Reading Self in Medieval Latin and French Bestiaries* (University of Chicago Press, 2017), pp. 2-3; and 'Original Skin: Flaying, Reading, and Thinking in the Legend of Saint Bartholomew and Other Works', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 36 (2006), 35-74 (p. 45).

<sup>44</sup> Patrick Geary, 'Sacred Commodities: The Circulation of Medieval Relics', in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. by Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 169-91 (p. 169).

<sup>45</sup> My discussion here resonates with the work of Bennett in particular, *Vibrant Matter*, pp. 22-23, 112.

<sup>46</sup> Kay, 'Original Skin', pp. 47- 56.

elements that have a less obvious connection to life or animation in a traditional sense.<sup>47</sup> For example, I consider how thinking about hagiographic texts and manuscripts in terms of networks can bring to the fore the particular agencies, associations, and effects of a manuscript component such as gold leaf in generating a sacred encounter. My work thus also engages in questions of readers' interactions with hagiographic manuscripts as material artefacts. In this, I draw on the work of Kathryn Rudy, who calls attention to how medieval users of manuscripts responded to them as tactile objects with devotional or miraculous qualities of their own.<sup>48</sup> I build on Rudy's interactive focus to explore more specifically how the experience of readers listening to, looking at, touching, kissing, damaging, and mutilating hagiographic manuscripts might generate connections and forms of contact with the sacred that parallel those created by relics.

Indeed, a range of work has explored the potential crossovers between saints' lives and relics.<sup>49</sup> In a way that is particularly helpful for my discussion, Wogan-Browne has outlined some of the ways in which hagiography might act as a form of contact relic, textually embodying forms of contact with saints.<sup>50</sup> Wogan-Browne's discussion of saints' lives as contact relics is founded on the importance of the sacred authority conveyed by hagiography's textuality, as well as chains of transmission of

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<sup>47</sup> Kay, *Animal Skins and the Reading Self*, p. 4. See also Bruce Holsinger, 'Of Pigs and Parchment: Medieval Studies and the Coming of the Animal', *PMLA*, 124 (2009), 616-23.

<sup>48</sup> Kathryn M. Rudy, 'Dirty Books: Quantifying Patterns of Use in Medieval Manuscripts Using a Densitometer', *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art*, 2.1 (2010) <<http://dx.doi.org/10.5092/jhna.2010.2.1.1>>; 'Kissing Images, Unfurling Rolls, Measuring Wounds, Sewing Badges and Carrying Talismans: Considering Some Harley Manuscripts through the Physical Rituals they Reveal', *Electronic British Library Journal* (2011), 1-56 <<https://www.bl.uk/ebj/2011/articles/article5.html>> [accessed 20 May 2019]. See also Alicia Spencer-Hall's study of hagiography as a multi-media experience, combining visual, tactile, and aural elements, *Medieval Saints and Modern Screens: Divine Visions as Cinematic Experience* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017), p. 13.

<sup>49</sup> In particular there is a focus on lives of Saint Margaret, which functioned as literal textual amulets. See for example Aymar Alphonse, 'Contribution à l'étude du folklore de la Haute-Auvergne: le sachet accoucheur et ses mystères', *Annales du Midi: revue archéologique, historique et philologique de la France méridionale*, 38 (1926) 273-347; Louis Carolus-Barré, 'Un nouveau parchemin amulette et la légende de sainte Marguerite patronne des femmes en couches', *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 123.2 (1979), 256-75; Elizabeth L'Estrange, *Holy Motherhood: Gender, Dynasty, and Visual Culture in the Later Middle Ages* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), pp. 60-62; Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, 'The Apple's Message: Some Post-Conquest Hagiographic Accounts of Textual Transmission', in *Late Medieval Religious Texts and their Transmission: Essays in Honour of A. I. Doyle*, ed. by A. J. Minnis (Cambridge: Brewer, 1994), pp. 39-53 (pp. 47-49).

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

intradiegetic contact between saints and the texts' narrators.<sup>51</sup> She focuses, in other words, on how hagiography mediates sacred contact through the relationships it traces between texts and people. As I have suggested throughout this section, while not discounting the importance of human and textual elements, this thesis is concerned with thinking about how the sacred connections traced by hagiography can be expanded beyond the human and beyond texts to encompass nonhuman forms of materiality. Thus, in contrast to Wogan-Browne, I explore how hagiography might generate sacred contact and function like a relic in ways that do not depend on human or textual intermediaries, but rather on multiple connections between entities of all kinds, from bodies to books to artefacts to God. As I seek to demonstrate throughout this thesis, working with the theoretical tool of networks that incorporate both human and nonhuman entities, people and artefacts, offers new ways of thinking about hagiography that emphasise that the saintly encounters this literature generates are not only about textuality and human subjectivity, but also invested in questions of materiality, nonhuman agency, and sacred presence. In the following section, I unpack in more detail what it means to think about medieval religious culture with networks.

## Networks

Throughout, my discussion draws my corpus of saints' lives into dialogue with a selection of modern and contemporary theories of materiality and object relations. Foundational here is Actor-Network-Theory (ANT), developed by Latour in numerous publications over several decades. At the core of ANT is the principle that all actions are produced not by thinking human subjects acting on inert objects, but through the complex networks formed by diverse combinations of entities which are not necessarily human or animate in the traditional sense.<sup>52</sup> In his most recent work, Latour has distanced himself from ANT, criticising the potentially homogenising effect of ANT's focus on networks. By describing every action and entity in terms of networks, Latour argues, ANT risks failing to account for the differences between the specific relations, pathways, and realities of what he identifies as different

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<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43.

<sup>52</sup> Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, p. 10.

‘modes of existence’, such as science, law, religion, technology.<sup>53</sup> As I explore in Chapter Four, although Latour’s recent work thus moves away from ANT, networks themselves remain of central importance to his thinking: everything can still be grasped as a network, but the task Latour sets is to move beyond the discovery of networks of association to identify the ‘type of value that seems to circulate in a particular network’.<sup>54</sup> Nevertheless, just as networks remain vital to Latour’s later work, so, I will demonstrate, ANT’s central concerns remain a helpful point of departure for investigating the ways that medieval hagiography might also be preoccupied with the agencies and connections of entities beyond the human.

Potential applications of Latour’s work have been explored in a range of disciplines, from archaeology to art history, history, theology, and literature, but ANT has not yet been considered in relation to hagiography.<sup>55</sup> As I will argue, Latour’s widening of the capacity for agency beyond the human offers significant opportunity for dialogue with the key concerns of medieval hagiographic writing about relics, most notably hagiography’s concern with the agency invested in material artefacts, the sacred, and texts. My aim is not to produce an ANT account of relics or hagiography as such, but rather to see how ANT’s call to consider the world in terms of networks, that is, in terms of transformative connections and collectives between multiple entities and agencies of all kinds, may reveal new ways of thinking about medieval religious texts. My approach might thus be described as a sort of ‘network thinking’ rather than a strict application of ANT. Indeed, my discussion frequently highlights how medieval hagiography is engaged in thinking about the world in terms that are at times in step with Latour’s work and at times significantly out of step with his thinking. In this section of my introduction, I use Foy’s Anglo-Norman life, along with elements from her wider cult, as a case study to signal three

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<sup>53</sup> Bruno Latour, *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence: An Anthropology of the Moderns*, trans. by Catherine Porter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), pp. 18, 20-21, 53-54.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37, 61.

<sup>55</sup> See respectively Carl Knappett, *An Archaeology of Interaction: Network Perspectives on Material Culture and Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Beth Williamson, ‘Material Culture and Medieval Christianity’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Christianity*, ed. by John H. Arnold (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 61-70 (pp. 65-68); Kathleen Coyne Kelly, ‘Flea and ANT: Mapping the Mobility of the Plague, 1330s-1350s’, *Postmedieval*, 4 (2013) 219-32; Adam S. Miller, *Speculative Grace: Bruno Latour and Object-Oriented Theology* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013). Although see O’Donnell on using networks to think about medieval literary patronage, institutional, and personal relationships, “‘The ladies have made me quite fat’”, pp. 94-114.



ways in which Latour's thinking on agency will illuminate my study of hagiographic networks: the agency of nonhuman things; the agency of religious beings; and the entanglement of text and the material world.

### *Things*

One of the central tenets of Latour's thinking is his assertion that all entities, not only humans, have the capacity for agency; by extension, all entities can forge connections with entities of any other kind.<sup>56</sup> Hagiography frequently demonstrates this proposition in concrete ways. It describes a world populated by lively agents covering the full material and ontological spectrum: in this thesis alone, for example, I touch on moving statues; speaking corpses; expanding liquids; and a whole host of objects (from bodies and body parts to clothing, buildings, books, and containers in gold, jewels, tin, and stone) that miraculously heal faithful supplicants. Moreover, as I will explore further throughout the thesis, the figure of the network helps to unpack the ways these various material artefacts interact with each other, as well as with more immaterial (saintly, divine, semiotic) entities, and with the faithful within these texts as well as those who read them. I argue that these interactive connections and the groupings of entities they, however momentarily, draw together enable relics and other sacred artefacts to produce miracles, generate saintly contact, and manifest saintly presence. In Chapter One, I explore in detail how reading depictions of relics in medieval French hagiography through the lens of ANT can productively illuminate our understanding not only of relics, but also of medieval concepts of human and nonhuman materiality more broadly. Here, I make a case for the particular suitability of network thinking to examinations of medieval sacred artefacts and outline some of the primary ways in which this approach will contribute to my study.

The golden, jewelled reliquary that housed Foy's relics and represented the saint throughout the Middle Ages encapsulates the ways that medieval sacred things might already exemplify the sorts of thinking about nonhuman agency and interconnections that characterise ANT (Figure 1).<sup>57</sup> Foy's reliquary has a particularly literal agency, producing miracles for the pilgrims who travel to its site

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<sup>56</sup> Latour, 'On Actor-Network Theory', pp. 369, 373.

<sup>57</sup> This sort of figural statue reliquary was particularly common in southern France in the Middle Ages, see Remensnyder, 'Un problème de cultures ou de culture?', p. 361.

in the abbey church at Conques.<sup>58</sup> An ANT perspective also brings into focus the ways the reliquary encompasses less immediately obvious agencies, associations, and trajectories that are not tied to personhood, intentionality, or animation in any traditional sense.<sup>59</sup> Thus, we might think about the particular (material and historically contingent) agencies and associations of the reliquary's components: its gold casing whose properties of purity and durability evoke for the medieval viewer connections with a heavenly Jerusalem; its precious stones, with their properties of hardness, transparency, colour, and so on, and, within medieval lapidary traditions, their own powers to heal and influence; the concealed wooden core that traces a different trajectory of organic matter, potentially the site of decay; the saint's skull housed within, which similarly draws attention to organic decomposition, and to the potential of human body parts to function as things rather than people.<sup>60</sup> As this enumeration suggests, Foy's reliquary is a composite entity, foregrounding the ways that, as I will explore throughout the thesis, encounters with relics are rarely about straightforward connections between the faithful and the saint, but about an experience of a complexly intertwined collective – or network – of human and nonhuman matter and agencies. In this, the reliquary chimes in a particularly concrete way with Latour's assertion that the world is composed of networks of

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<sup>58</sup> Foy's eleventh-century Latin miracle collection by Bernard of Angers recounts numerous miracles performed through interaction with the reliquary statue. In particular, Book I Chapter 25 narrates how the reliquary itself appears to a supplicant in a dream vision, a role usually fulfilled by the saint herself: 'Huic per visum sancta Fides [...] in sacre imagines specie, visa fuit apparere' (*Liber miraculorum sancte Fidis*, ed. by A. Bouillet (Paris: Picard, 1897), I. 25, p. 65). Translated by Pamela Sheingorn as 'It seemed to him that Sainte Foy appeared to him in a vision [...] in the form of her sacred image' (*The Book of Sainte Foy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995, p. 92). Foy's miracle collection survives in fragmentary form in a number of manuscripts, of which the most complete version, and the basis for Bouillet's edition, is Sélestat, Bibliothèque Humaniste, MS latin 22. See Sheingorn, pp. 27-28. Bernard composed the first two books of the collection 1013-20, while the following two were produced 1020-c. 1075 by the Conques monks after his death, Kathleen Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn, *Writing Faith: Text, Sign and History in the Miracles of Sainte Foy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 6.

<sup>59</sup> Latour, 'On Actor-Network Theory', p. 369; Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, pp. 10, 70, 76.

<sup>60</sup> On the reliquary's make-up, see Ashley and Sheingorn, *Writing Faith*, p. 41. In the later Middle Ages a crystal window made Foy's skull visible, Jean Taralon and Dominique Taralon-Carlino, 'La Majesté d'or de Sainte Foy de Conques', *Bulletin Monumental*, 155 (1997), 11-73 (p. 21). On the properties of gold, see James Robinson, *Finer Than Gold: Saints and Relics in the Middle Ages* (London: British Museum, 2011), p. 102; on precious stones, Valerie Allen, 'Mineral Virtue', in *Animal, Vegetable, Mineral: Ethics and Objects*, ed. by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (Washington, DC: Oliphaunt Books, 2012), pp. 123-52 (p. 130).

interconnected entities that all have an equal capacity to act, rather than action having a single, unified, often human origin.<sup>61</sup> Moreover, the reliquary's components shift over time: initially assembled in the late ninth century, the reliquary underwent renovations throughout the Middle Ages, as the precious materials that coat its surface were added to (as a result of pilgrim donations) or removed (on account of their financial value).<sup>62</sup> Each component thus traces individual trajectories through space and time, hinting at the ways in which sacred artefacts forge connections across spatial and temporal boundaries.<sup>63</sup> Again in a way that resonates with Latourian networks, Foy's reliquary foregrounds how the networks of sacred artefacts not only draw together visual, tangible, material components, but also include less self-evident connections between distant spaces and times.



Figure 1. Reliquary of Saint Foy, fifth-tenth centuries, wood, gold, silver, precious stones, rock crystal, 83 × 23 × 35 cm, Trésor de l'abbatiale Sainte-Foy de Conques, Conques.

<sup>61</sup> Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, pp. 2, 44, 61, 116, 254.

<sup>62</sup> On the statue's ninth-century date, see Sheingorn, p. 16; on its later refashionings and changing make-up, see Ashley and Sheingorn, *Writing Faith*, p. 41; Taralon and Taralon-Carlino, p. 14.

<sup>63</sup> On some of the (human, temporal) connections forged by the reliquary's donated jewels, see Taralon and Taralon-Carlino, p. 42.

In particular, the reliquary resonates with Latour's characterisation of the dynamic, transformative nature of connections possible within a network. From an ANT perspective, no network participant is inert; moreover, their participation transforms the network's overall meaning and outcome, as well as transforming them in their turn.<sup>64</sup> Latour illustrates his understanding of the transformations operated through forging new connections with the deceptively simple example of a gun and its placement. A gun held in the hand is not the same as a gun in a drawer or a gun in an armoury: when someone holds a gun in their hand, both person and gun are modified, 'A good citizen becomes a criminal [...] a silent gun becomes a fired gun'.<sup>65</sup> In Latour's account, then, the gun is not an inert tool used by a human subject, but a participant in a gun-human network that alters both human and gun and produces the 'outcome' of a shooting. A similar sense of how entry into new connections can transform all elements involved is brought home by the head of Foy's reliquary. The reliquary repurposes the head of a fifth-century Roman statue, probably depicting a (male) emperor.<sup>66</sup> The meaning of this male, imperial, Roman head is transformed through its inclusion in the reliquary, working to present Foy's female saintly body as visibly whole.<sup>67</sup> At the same time, it inflects the experience of the reliquary. As modern commentators on Foy's reliquary have noted, the head's great size, which is out of proportion with the rest of the body, and its powerful, fixed stare lend the reliquary an unusually forbidding authority in relation to other person-shaped reliquaries of this kind.<sup>68</sup> Both the individual component (the head) and the overarching network (the reliquary) are transformed by the head's incorporation into Foy's statue. To reformulate Latour's example of the gun: the head as part of its previous Roman statue is not the same as the head as part of Foy's reliquary. Nor is Foy's reliquary or its 'outcome' (here the effect produced on viewers) unchanged by the head's incorporation. The individual constituent part's particular agencies, traits, and associations are not smoothed over or diminished by

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<sup>64</sup> Latour, 'On Technical Mediation: Philosophy, Sociology, Genealogy', *Common Knowledge*, 3.2 (1994), 29-64 (pp. 31-35); Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, p. 128.

<sup>65</sup> Latour, 'On Technical Mediation', pp. 31-35.

<sup>66</sup> Taralon and Taralon-Carlino, p. 24.

<sup>67</sup> Remensnyder, 'Un problème de cultures ou de culture?', p. 365.

<sup>68</sup> Taralon and Taralon-Carlino, p. 13. The forbidding authority of the reliquary is also brought out in Bernard's *Liber miraculorum*, I. 25, discussed above, n. 58, in which the apparition of the reliquary is described as appearing 'terribiliter' (terrifyingly) and 'minaciter' (threateningly).

participation in sacred networks, but continue to contribute to those networks' outcomes and meanings. Foy's reliquary encapsulates how medieval sacred objects might offer particularly rich demonstrations of Latour's thinking about the nonhuman's capacity for agency and the production of action through multifarious, dynamic networks. In turn, examining this reliquary in terms of the network indicates how this model offers a helpful framework for uncovering what medieval artefacts are already doing, and accounting for the transformative contributions of their various interconnected components.

### *Religious beings*

Latour's broadening of conceptions of agency to embrace the nonhuman also has implications for the study of specifically religious beings, such as saints, divinities, and sacred objects. Latour points out that because spiritual beings do not belong to the 'limited range of [implicitly human] agencies' admitted by modern secular scholars, scholarship on religion tends to neglect the claims made by believers about who or what is producing action.<sup>69</sup> He illustrates this point with the example of contemporary pilgrims flocking to see a visionary apparition of the Virgin Mary, pointing out that 'no one in his or her right scholarly mind would take the Virgin herself as the reason why so many people gather [...] in spite of the fact that this is what is explicitly said by [...] the faithful'.<sup>70</sup> In other words, scholars (here Latour takes particular aim at sociologists) insist that religious beings are human projections onto the world, rather than beings with agency in their own right.<sup>71</sup> Rather than adjudicating whether or not spiritual beings 'really' exist, Latour suggests we extend agency beyond the human and grant the capacity to produce action to religious beings. Latour thus induces scholars to take religious beings seriously: 'Why not say that in religion what counts are the beings that make people act, just as every believer has always insisted?'.<sup>72</sup>

While Latour's criticisms are targeted principally at sociologists of the modern era, a similar tendency to neglect the agencies of spiritual beings and to

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<sup>69</sup> Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, p. 234.

<sup>70</sup> Bruno Latour, "'Thou Shalt Not Take the Lord's Name in Vain": Being a Sort of Sermon on the Hesitations of Religious Speech', *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, 39 (2001), 215-34 (pp. 229-30).

<sup>71</sup> Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, p. 235.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

present the sacred as a human projection onto the world can at times be discerned in recent historical and anthropological studies of medieval relics. Perhaps as a corrective to earlier faith-driven scholarship, modern empirical scholarship has emphasised, for example, that saints' power is constructed by the faith community; that miraculous healings are fostered by relic shrines' febrile atmospheres; that relics' power to communicate sanctity, produce responses, and generate miracles rests entirely on the explicatory containers and narratives that surround them.<sup>73</sup> In particular, Geary argues for the necessity of external narratives produced by human subjects to construct and maintain the sacred meaning of relics, which themselves have no intrinsic value, being 'only' fragments of bone, cloth, dust.<sup>74</sup> Indeed, Alexandra Walsham argues that without such supports, relics are 'inert and lifeless objects devoid of significance and worth'.<sup>75</sup> In other words, relics' identity, authority, and power, as well as the connections and relationships they trace, are entirely bound up with the projections, constructions, and actions of human subjects external to the relic or the saint. These historical accounts of the cult of relics are at odds with what medieval hagiography has to say about relics' agency. Throughout the thesis, I discuss the miraculous healings produced by relics, healings which are ascribed by the texts selected to a variety, frequently a combination, of spiritual beings and sacred things: God, the saints, their bodies, and other artefacts. For example, in the passage from *Foy* that opened this thesis, the miraculous healings that occur at the site of her relics are ascribed to Christ (907-08), because of his love of Foy (914). Elsewhere in *Foy*, healing miracles occur at the touch of Foy's corpse ('son cors' (1187)) and of the basket that contains it ('cele escheppe' (1188)). My point here is not to discount the important historicist work being done on the ways human agency shapes medieval relic cults. Indeed, I explore at length the contributions of faithful communities, as well as the artistic and narrative agencies

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<sup>73</sup> For examples of arguments focusing on human subjects and creations, see: Ronald C. Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims: Popular Beliefs in Medieval England* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), pp. 13, 73 on miraculous healings and communities. On the essential role of reliquaries, see Cynthia Hahn, 'The Voices of the Saints: Speaking Reliquaries', *Gesta*, 36 (1997), 20-29 (p. 28). On the way a relic's aesthetic surrounds create their sacred meaning, see Patricia Cox Miller, "'The Little Blue Flower is Red": Relics and the Poetizing of the Body', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 8 (2000), 213-36 (pp. 214-25).

<sup>74</sup> Geary, *Furta Sacra*, pp. 5, 8; Indeed Geary opens his study with the statement that its subject 'is not [...] relics, but rather people', p. 3.

<sup>75</sup> Alexandra Walsham, 'Introduction: Relics and Remains', *Past & Present*, 206.5 (2010), 9-36 (p. 14)

involved in hagiographic encounters with relics.<sup>76</sup> Nevertheless, Latour's injunction to direct attention to and account for the agency of the beings that believers say are producing action (in the case of medieval hagiography, this often means relics, saints, and the divine), helpfully allows for a broader view of relic encounters that incorporates but does not unduly privilege the human.

The multiple actors *Foy* designates as producing miraculous healing (Foy's relics, their container, the saint, Christ) points to another potential point of dialogue between medieval hagiography and Latour's conceptions of religion. Developing his claim that religious beings are not human projections onto the world but have agencies of their own, Latour resists a separation of the spiritual and the material world. Latour rejects characterisations of (Christian) religion as concerned with transcendence, that is with a movement above or beyond the world: 'religion is not about transcendence [...] but all about immanence to which is added the renewal, the rendering present again of this immanence'.<sup>77</sup> Religion, for Latour, is about paying attention to, making visible and present, what is proximate to the faithful.<sup>78</sup> Although Latour has little interest in premodernity, medieval hagiography – a genre in which saints inhabit the material world and where material bodies, artefacts, and landscapes embody and enact divine agencies – offers countless examples of how the tangible and the proximate manifest divine presence in a way that resonates with Latour's observations.<sup>79</sup> As *Foy* suggests, hagiographic accounts of relic miracles assert the presence of the divine in the world, both through a direct demonstration of Christ's power on earth ('Jhesu [...] | Musta ses vertuz' (907-08)) and through its depictions of the sacred agencies of earthly bodies and artefacts (Foy's body and basket container (1187-88)). Importantly, then, hagiography allows for a wider view of miraculous agency than that strictly prescribed by medieval theological accounts, in which all miracles are God's work, and all relics and saints are simply channels through which God works. Relics may make God present, but they do not strictly

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<sup>76</sup> On community, see especially Chapter Two, pp. 130-58; on reliquaries, see Chapter One, pp. 88-100, Chapter Four, pp. 263-77.

<sup>77</sup> Latour, "Thou Shalt Not Take the Lord's Name in Vain", p. 219.

<sup>78</sup> Latour, *Inquiry*, p. 322; Bruno Latour, "Thou Shall Not Freeze-Frame" or, How Not to Misunderstand the Science and Religion Debate', in *Science, Religion, and the Human Experience*, ed. by James D. Proctor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 27-48 (p. 36). See discussion in Miller, *Speculative Grace*, p. 119.

<sup>79</sup> On the tangibility, and accessibility of the saints, see Magdalena Elizabeth Carrasco, 'Spirituality in Context: The Romanesque Illustrated Life of St. Radegund of Poitiers (Poitiers, Bibl. Mun., MS 250)', *Art Bulletin*, 72.3 (1990), 414-35 (p. 430).

speaking, in this theological account, have an agency of their own.<sup>80</sup> What *Foy* describes is closer to Latour's sense of distributed, multiple agencies: miracles are produced through networks in which God is present, but relics, saints, and artefacts retain their agency and activity, they are not inert conduits. I will explore areas of possible tension between Latour's thinking and medieval texts later on in my thesis. In Chapter One I discuss in more detail how the role of an omnipotent God in saintly miracles might challenge some of Latour's conceptions of religion; in Chapter Four I test Latour's conceptions of religion, transcendence, and presence against medieval ideas about the Incarnation and the Virgin Mary. For now, I would like to highlight the important areas of potential overlap between Latour's work and the study of medieval religious culture. *Foy* suggests that thinking with Latour's conceptions of agency enables discussion of hagiographic accounts of relic miracles in ways that are more faithful to what hagiography itself is saying about relics than much modern historical scholarship, or for that matter much medieval theology. Networks make room for religious beings in scholarship and for nonhuman (nondivine) agents in religion.

### *Texts*

Thinking with networks is also about making room for material things and nonlinguistic entities in the production of meaning and formation of relationships, something that comes to the fore in Latour's conception of translation. As highlighted above, Latour emphasises the mutually transformative nature of the connections forged between entities within a network.<sup>81</sup> Latour expresses these transformative connections in terms of translation. Translation, in Latour's sense, describes the 'connection[s] that transport [...] transformations' that are essential to network thinking.<sup>82</sup> For Latour translation accounts for the fact that networks are not simply about smoothly transmitting a certain action, outcome, or meaning through a chain of linked intermediary entities, but involve a multitude of possible distortions, modifications, and displacements that each network participant introduces.<sup>83</sup> Importantly, then, for Latour translation is not limited to the linguistic, but rather

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<sup>80</sup> As expressed, for example, by Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, III. 25. 6.

<sup>81</sup> Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, p. 128.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>83</sup> Latour, 'On Technical Mediation', p. 32.



describes an ontological operation in which all entities participate.<sup>84</sup> Latour's redefinition of translation is part of his broader rethinking of the relationship between language and the world. Latour asserts that language is not separate from the material world that it supposedly represents, but rather that word and world are intertwined.<sup>85</sup> Part of Latour's redistribution of agency to the nonhuman involves the distribution of the capacity for translation and articulation to nonhuman and nonlinguistic entities.<sup>86</sup> That is to say, words are only one of the ways in which the world articulates itself. Nonhuman, nonlinguistic entities are not excluded from this work of world-making, but produce the real through the trajectories and connections they forge with other entities.<sup>87</sup> I return to the entangled ways language and things articulate the world (and in particular the sacred) in Chapter Four's discussion of Marian miracles. In the final part of this section, I explore how Latour's understanding of translation might be brought into critical conversation with medieval conceptions of *translatio* as they play out in *Foy*.

Latour's understanding of translation both chimes with and is challenged by medieval *translatio*. Latour explicitly distinguishes his use of the term from linguistic translation: translation as he understands it is not, he writes, a shift from one vocabulary to another 'as if the two languages existed independently'.<sup>88</sup> The distinction Latour draws between linguistic translation as transfer between two independent categories and his definition of translation as transformation and displacement does not ring true for any period, but particularly not for the Middle Ages. Not only was the relationship between Latin and the vernacular languages characterised by coexistence and interdependence, but concepts of translation embraced notions of cultural transfer, transformation, displacement, and appropriation.<sup>89</sup> The concept of interlinguistic translation with which Latour takes issue, then, does not conform to premodern ways of thinking about translation. Medieval *translatio* encompasses linguistic translation, the work of metaphor, and

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<sup>84</sup> See Miller, *Speculative Grace*, p. 59.

<sup>85</sup> Bruno Latour, *Pandora's Hope: Essays on the Reality of Science Studies* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 64.

<sup>86</sup> Latour, 'On Actor-Network Theory', p. 375.

<sup>87</sup> Latour, *Pandora's Hope*, pp. 141-42. See discussion in Miller, *Speculative Grace*, p. 70.

<sup>88</sup> Latour, 'On Technical Mediation', p. 32.

<sup>89</sup> See Emma Campbell and Robert Mills, 'Introduction', in *Rethinking Medieval Translation: Ethics, Politics, Theory*, ed. by Emma Campbell and Robert Mills (Cambridge: Brewer, 2012), pp. 1-20 (p. 5).

physical transfer between places.<sup>90</sup> In the allied concepts of *translatio imperii* and *translatio studii* translation takes on particular ideological weight as a means to trace both continuity and change over temporal, spatial, and linguistic boundaries.<sup>91</sup> Moreover, *translatio* has a particularly sacred significance, describing the transfer of relics between locations and containers, as well as the narratives that recount this movement.<sup>92</sup> Medieval *translatio* already describes, although in a different way from Latour's translation, a sense of transformative displacement rather than unchanging transfer, as well as an intertwining of linguistic and nonlinguistic entities, embracing the sacred, physical, spatial, and corporeal.

Thinking with translation/*translatio* offers a particularly useful window into the connections between medieval texts and nontextual entities that will form a major focus of this thesis. *Foy* brings into focus how *translatio* draws attention to the interconnections between texts and nonlinguistic things. Like all the texts I study, *Foy* is a linguistic translation. Its author, Simon de Walsingham, compiled, translated, and adapted his 1242-line octosyllabic verse text from several eleventh-century Latin sources.<sup>93</sup> *Foy* is also profoundly engaged with questions of sacred,

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<sup>90</sup> Kathleen M. Ashley, and Pamela Sheingorn, 'The Translation of Foy: Bodies, Texts and Places', in *The Medieval Translator - Traduire au Moyen Age 5*, ed. by Roger Ellis and René Tixier (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996), pp. 29-49 (pp. 30, 32); Miranda Griffin, *Transforming Tales: Rewriting Metamorphosis in Medieval French Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 17.

<sup>91</sup> See for example Catherine Sanok, *Her Life Historical: Exemplarity and Female Saints' Lives in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), p. 20; Zrinka Stahuljak, *Bloodless Genealogies of the French Middle Ages: Translatio, Kinship, and Metaphor* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), p. 156.

<sup>92</sup> Sigal, 'Le Déroulement des translations', p. 213. In medieval French, the terms 'translatiun', and 'translator' preserve this multiplicity of meanings, denoting a broad range of linguistic, spatial, material, bodily, sacred significations. Indeed in French while the linguistic connotations of 'translator' are retained, the specifically sacred meaning of translation as the movement of saint's relics becomes one of the primary and most frequent uses of the term. See definitions in *The Anglo-Norman Dictionary* Online Edition <<http://www.anglo-norman.net/>> [accessed 22 August 2018].

<sup>93</sup> Foy's sources include prose and metrical versions of the saint's *Passio* (c. 1050); prose (c. 1020-60) and metrical (c. 1060) narratives of her posthumous translation; in addition to the saint's liturgical offices. The prose *Passio* is edited as *Passio ss. Fidis, Caprasii, Primi et Feliciani, Acta Sanctorum*, 56, October 20, VIII, (1870), pp. 823-26; the metrical version is edited as *Passio metrica ss. Fidis et Caprasii, Acta Sanctorum*, 56, October 20, VIII, (1870), pp. 826-29. Both had a widespread manuscript transmission throughout the Middle Ages. For discussion, dating, and manuscripts of Foy's *Passiones*, see Delbert W. Russell, *Verse Saints' Lives Written in the French of England* (Tempe: ACMRS, 2012), pp. 41-42; Sheingorn, p. 22. The prose *Translatio*, produced at Conques c. 1020-60, is edited as *Translatio altera sancta Fidis virginis et martyris, Acta Sanctorum*, October 6, III, pp. 294-300. This text was adapted into Latin verse c. 1060, edited as *Translatio metrica sancte*

bodily, and spatial *translatio*.<sup>94</sup> Foy's final third is devoted not to the saint's life or martyrdom (which took place in Agen at the end of the third or early fourth centuries), but to her corpse's ninth-century translation from Agen to Conques.<sup>95</sup> In Simon's account, after receiving divine visions commanding them to seek Foy's relics, one of the Conques monks infiltrates the Agen community, breaks open Foy's tomb, and steals her body (977-1090). At the moment that Simon introduces the topic of Foy's translation to Conques, he draws attention to the nature of his text as a translation, noting that his information is coming from a Latin source:

Del grant tresor k'[Agen] perdi  
 Si en est Cunches enrichi.  
 Bien sai ke cel plut a martir,  
 E k'ele esteit a son pleisir  
 De la cité d'Agen portée  
 E dunc a Cunches translatée.  
 Le latin ceo nus cunte e dist  
 (925-31)

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*Fidis virginis et martyris, Acta Sanctorum*, October 6, III, pp. 289-94. For discussion, see Russell, *Verse Saints' Lives*, p. 42. On Simon's use of liturgy, see Foy, ed. by Baker, pp. 55-57. The Anglo-Norman Foy is the second surviving vernacular version of the saint's life, after the Occitan *Chanson*, produced in the Rouergue region c. 1070, and surviving in a single eleventh-century manuscript (Leiden, Universitaire Bibliotheken Leiden, MS VLO 60, fols 14<sup>v</sup>-28<sup>v</sup>); it is edited by Ernest Hoepffner and Prosper Alfaric, *La Chanson de sainte Foy*, 2 vols (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1926), II (1926). See Russell, *Verse Saints' Lives*, pp. 43-44.

<sup>94</sup> Several other scholars have drawn attention to the importance of translation in Foy's cult. Wogan-Browne characterises Foy as a figure of translation and transmission, *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture*, p. 69. Ashley and Sheingorn examine the connections between verbal and bodily translation in Foy's Latin texts, with an emphasis on the cultural reformulations these displacements imply, although notably they do not consider Foy's vernacular lives, 'The Translation of Foy', p. 30.

<sup>95</sup> Foy's translation to Conques had definitely taken place – or at least was officially recognised as having taken place – by 883, when an entry in a Conques cartulary asserts that the monastery houses the tombs of Saints Vincent and Foy: 'hubi sanctus Vincentius et sanctae Fides tumulati quiescunt', see *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Conques en Rouergue*, ed. by Gustave Desjardins (Paris: Picard, 1879), no. 4, p. 5. The cartulary survives in a single early twelfth-century copy, Rodez, Archives de la Société des lettres, sciences et arts de l'Aveyron, MS fonds de Conques 3 E 1. However, the Conques monks had been attempting to acquire the relics of a saint as early as c. 855, and it is possible that the translation took place c. 865-66. See Ashley and Sheingorn, *Writing Faith*, p. 5; Geary, *Furta Sacra*, p. 59. The impetus for the acquisition of Foy's relics came in part from Conques's ninth-century rivalry with the nearby monastery of Figeac, which threatened its authority in the region, see Sheingorn, p. 8.

This passage's characterisation of Foy's physical displacement calls attention to several important points that will inform this thesis. Firstly, it reinforces the ways in which medieval religious culture might anticipate Latour's blurring of boundaries between language and things, texts and matter, active human subjects and inert objects. Foy's physical *translatio* speaks volumes, communicating the saint's own desires (927-8), and thus Conques's superiority as a resting place for her body (961-68).<sup>96</sup> Foy's body is not an inert object of translation, but a dynamic participant in her displacement. *Foy* underlines the multivalency of medieval *translatio*, suggesting how, in a way that preempts Latour's point, *translatio* makes translation an operation undergone and performed by entities of all kinds, including (but not exclusively) linguistic entities.<sup>97</sup> This passage foregrounds the ways that medieval relics actively participate in making meaning and forging relationships.

Moreover, this passage points to a connection between Foy's relic translation and the work of producing vernacular texts from Latin sources. This connection suggests that focusing on relics encourages interpretive approaches that consider hagiographic texts as part of networks that are about more than just text or human subjects. *Foy*'s composition (c. 1210-15) illustrates this point: the text was possibly written to coincide with the renovation of the saint's chapel in Simon's home institution, the monastery of Bury St Edmunds.<sup>98</sup> On multiple levels, then, the French text is bound up with other, nontextual, bodily, spatial, and material means of communicating Foy such as the movement of relics and religious architecture. *Foy*'s intertwined translations point to the importance of examining texts as participants in heterogeneous networks that incorporate material bodies, things, and spaces.

The parallel between linguistic and physical *translatio* suggested by *Foy* also points to how thinking in terms of these heterogeneous networks might illuminate the agencies of hagiographic texts. If Foy and her body participate in her physical translation to Conques, Simon frames his composition as also potentially incorporating saintly agency. In a way which brings to mind Latour's claim that actions are produced through a multiplicity of agencies, *Foy*'s prologue draws

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<sup>96</sup> Across the Middle Ages, pious theft was a legitimate means for institutions to gain new relics: if relics were able to be moved, the thinking went, then that demonstrated that the saint wanted to be moved, legitimising even the most outrageous thefts, Geary, *Furta Sacra*, pp. 113-14.

<sup>97</sup> See Latour, 'On Actor-Network Theory', p. 375; Latour, *Pandora's Hope*, pp. 141-42.

<sup>98</sup> M. Dominica Legge, *Anglo-Norman in the Cloisters: The Influence of the Orders upon Anglo-Norman Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1950), p. 10.

attention not only to Simon's own work, but also to the active roles played by the wider Bury St Edmunds community in requesting the translation, and thus contributing to its production (75-89).<sup>99</sup> Moreover, Simon writes that his composition is an act of devotion to Foy, which is motivated by the saint and God (85-88). We might consequently conceive of the agency of hagiographic composition as a phenomenon that not only involves a central author figure but also encompasses a wider network of human, saintly, and divine participants. Thinking with networks moves away from a more traditional conception of the hagiographic narrator figure as an exclusive mediator between God and reader to a more diffuse model of authorship.<sup>100</sup> This networked model of authorship accounts for the roles of the many human subjects involved in producing a text, from the translator to the scribe to the community in which the text is embedded, as I explore in Chapter Two.<sup>101</sup> While the multiplicity of figures that produce medieval texts (patrons, commissioners, scribes) has long been recognised, thinking with ANT also draws attention to the roles of nonhuman agencies.<sup>102</sup> This might include saintly and divine agencies, as in this example from *Foy*, as well as the agencies of entities not considered animate in a traditional sense. For instance, throughout the thesis, I consider the potential agencies of elements such as manuscripts, parchment, and gold leaf in producing hagiography.<sup>103</sup> In network thinking authorial agency is not necessarily person centred, but spread across a network in which saint and God participate alongside author, book, parchment, and so on.

This networked model of authorial agency draws attention to another thread that runs throughout this thesis: how hagiography provides access to the sacred through the networks it forges and participates in. Simon foregrounds his translation as a point of sacred access and a source of potential salvation:

Deu doint ke turnë a profit

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<sup>99</sup> Latour, 'On Actor-Network Theory', pp. 369, 373; Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, pp. 44, 61.

<sup>100</sup> Several scholars have stressed the mediating function of hagiography, its narrators, and its authors, as conduits for communication between heaven and earth. See for example Cazelles, *The Lady as Saint*, p. 26; Gaunt, pp. 182-83; Karl D. Uitti, *Story, Myth, and Celebration in Old French Narrative Poetry: 1050-1200* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), p. 52.

<sup>101</sup> See Chapter Two, pp. 125-30 on networked models of authorship.

<sup>102</sup> See for example Wogan-Browne's discussion of patronage, *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture*, pp. 151.

<sup>103</sup> See for example Chapter One, pp. 101-12.

A tuz iceus ky l'averunt  
 E ki entendrë en voudrunt;  
 A cest romanz deivent entendre  
 Ke latin ne sievent aprendre  
 (90-94)

This passage is another reminder of the importance of approaching medieval texts as embedded in material networks: *Foy* is something to be possessed and held as well as listened to (91-92). The passage foregrounds the multiple agencies at work in an encounter with hagiography, from Simon's labour translating the text (93-94) to God's will (90), from the effects of the text's words and the book's material presence (91-92) to the faithful's desire to listen (92). Moreover, both possessing and hearing *Foy* conveys spiritual benefit to the faithful. *Foy* brings devotees into contact with the divine, laying the groundwork for salvation. In other words, *Foy* is already constituted by a tangle of interconnected agencies (material, human, divine), and faithful readers' encounters with this tangle forge new sacred connections in which readers are themselves potentially transformed. The ways in which hagiography forges sacred connections that potentially transform readers is a recurrent concern in this thesis. As I explore throughout, and in particular in Chapter Four, medieval vernacular hagiography frequently demonstrates how the networks of saints' lives and their manuscripts incorporate readers into sacred contact that is not reliant on saints' physical proximity, transforming the reader in the process. Simon's comparison between *Foy*'s textual translation and the physical translation of the saint's relics already suggests that texts and the books that contain them might, through the networks they forge, perform similar work to the relic itself; this is another point that will be developed further in individual chapters.

In this section I have explored the interwoven uses of translation/*translatio* in *Foy* to point to some of the principal ways in which I will deploy network thinking to illuminate my study of medieval hagiography. *Translatio*'s multivalency as linguistic and physical displacement imbricates text, matter, and the sacred in ways that resonate with Latour's claims about the lack of separation between language and what it ostensibly represents. At the same time, comparison of Latour's translation and medieval *translatio* also points to the ways in which Latour's work is preoccupied with dismantling what he identifies as modern assumptions about the world (here, the distinction between linguistic translation and his own definition of

translation) that do not hold sway in medieval examples. As I explore in particular in Chapter One, Latour frequently sets out to disrupt post-Enlightenment oppositions (such as that between humans and things) that were not necessarily important in the Middle Ages.<sup>104</sup> More broadly, *translatio* focuses attention on how hagiography is engaged in networks incorporating much more than text and human agency, encompassing the material, the corporeal, and the divine. The multiple agencies at play in Foy's translations foreground how thinking about hagiography with networks provides fertile ground for exploring Latour's concepts of agency, religious beings, and language. Above all, network thinking asserts that in order to be properly accounted for, any study of hagiography must attend not only to text, but to a host of other material and divine agencies.

## Scope and content

In order to establish meaningful comparisons across different texts, I have chosen a corpus that shares certain common features. The texts selected for this study all share a sustained interest in relics, were produced in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and were composed in verse. While prose saints' lives begin to appear from the early thirteenth century they do not form part of this study.<sup>105</sup> This is partly a question of scale: the inclusion of prose accounts, particularly the many unedited lives compiled in legendaries, would expand the project beyond a reasonable scope. Moreover, there are in this period significant differences in the function and character of verse and prose lives. Prose works are broadly associated with historical reliability and truthfulness, in dialogue with chronicles and historiography.<sup>106</sup> Verse hagiography,

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<sup>104</sup> See Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, pp. 90, 164, 218.

<sup>105</sup> B. Brunel-Lobrichon, A.-F. Leurquin-Labie, and M. Thiry-Stassin, 'L'Hagiographie de langue française sur le Continent IX<sup>e</sup>-XV<sup>e</sup> siècle', in *Hagiographies: histoire internationale de la littérature hagiographique latine et vernaculaire en Occident des origines à 1550*, ed. by Guy Philippart, 6 vols (Turnhout: Brepols, 1994-2014), II (1996), pp. 291-371 (p. 307). See for example Wauchier de Denain's prose versions of the lives of Saints Martial of Limoges and Nicholas (c. 1212), both of which survive in a substantial number of manuscripts, see Wauchier de Denain, *La Vie saint Marcel de Lymoges*, ed. by Molly Lynde-Recchia (Geneva: Droz, 2005); and *La Vie mon seigneur saint Nicholas le beneoit confessor*, ed. by John Jay Thompson (Geneva: Droz, 1999).

<sup>106</sup> Brunel-Lobrichon, Leurquin-Labie, and Thiry-Stassin, p. 307. See also Ogden, p. 11. This distinction – how a difference in textual form entails a difference in character and function – is illustrated particularly acutely by Guillaume de Saint-Pathus's early fourteenth-

in contrast, fosters affinities with other vernacular verse genres such as romance or *chansons de geste*, offering fertile ground for creative and formal reinvention.<sup>107</sup> Verse and prose, then, are networked in different ways.

Textual form has also informed my selection of dates. The texts selected were composed in a period spanning just over a century: the earliest (the nun of Barking's life of Edward the Confessor) was composed after 1163, and the latest (an anonymous life of Eloi of Noyon) before 1294.<sup>108</sup> This period marks a high point in the production of Anglo-Norman and continental French hagiography, and a time when verse dominated on both sides of the Channel: over a hundred extant verse lives date to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.<sup>109</sup> Although a few lives predate the mid-twelfth century, none deal substantially with relics.<sup>110</sup> While composition of verse hagiography continued into the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in northern France, this later period also saw the growing popularity of prose hagiography and the significant changes to the genre this entailed.<sup>111</sup> Moreover, the fourteenth century

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century prose *Vie de saint Louis*. Drawing on testimonial accounts of Louis IX's life and posthumous miracles, Guillaume's text in form and character has more in common with Latin shrine miracle collections or the documents collected for canonisation procedures than it does the verse lives of my corpus. See Guillaume de Saint-Pathus, *Vie de saint Louis*, ed. by H.-François Delaborde (Paris: Picard, 1899).

<sup>107</sup> Gehrke, p. 163. On some of the formal changes brought about by translation from Latin prose into verse, see Chapter One, pp. 74-75, 94-96.

<sup>108</sup> Nun of Barking, *La Vie d'Edouard le Confesseur by a Nun of Barking Abbey*, trans. by Jane Bliss (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014), pp. 38-39; *Les Miracles de saint Eloi: Li Miracles de mesires sains Elois*, ed. by Achille Peigné-Delacourt, *Mémoires de la Société académique d'archéologie, sciences et arts du département de l'Oise*, 4 (1859), 1-128 (p. 1).

<sup>109</sup> Broadly speaking, the composition of Anglo-Norman saints' lives blossoms in the twelfth century, while a similar flourishing on the continent is seen in the thirteenth century. See respectively M. Thiry-Stassin, 'L'Hagiographie en Anglo-Normand', in *Hagiographies*, ed. by Guy Philippart, I (1994), pp. 407-28 (pp. 407-24); Brunel-Lobrichon, Leurquin-Labie, and Thiry-Stassin, pp. 328-41.

<sup>110</sup> These early lives are of: Eulalie (late ninth century, northern France, edited in Giulio Bertoni, *Testi antichi francesi per uso delle scuole di filologia romanza* (Rome: Società editrice Dante Alighieri, 1908), pp. 7-8); Léger (late tenth century, continental France, edited in Bertoni, pp. 17-33); Alexis (1050-1100, Normandy, *La Vie de saint Alexis*, ed. by Christopher Storey (Geneva: Droz, 1968)); Brandon (c. 1100-c. 1125, England, Benedeit, *Le Voyage de saint Brendan*, ed. and trans. by Ian Short and Brian Merrilees (Paris: Champion, 2006)); Margaret (c. 1135-40, England, Wace, *La Vie de sainte Marguerite*, ed. by Hans-Erich Keller (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1990)); the Virgin Mary (*La Conception Nostre Dame*, by Wace, c. 1135-40, England, Wace, *La Vie de la Vierge Marie*, ed. by Victor Luzarche (Tours: Bouserez, 1859)). For the dating of these early lives, see Brunel-Lobrichon, Leurquin-Labie, and Thiry-Stassin, p. 328; Thiry-Stassin, pp. 409-10.

<sup>111</sup> Brunel-Lobrichon, Leurquin-Labie, and Thiry-Stassin, pp. 341-58.



saw the relative decline of Anglo-Norman hagiographic production.<sup>112</sup> The fourteenth century also witnessed shifts in conceptions of sainthood and devotional patterns (the increased importance of universal, mendicant, and mystic saints; a growing emphasis on images) that alter the character of relic veneration.<sup>113</sup> These three factors – the changing nature of continental hagiography, the decrease of Anglo-Norman production, and wider developments in relic veneration – informed my decision to end my study at the close of the thirteenth century.

Despite the large body of verse hagiography, comparatively few vernacular lives devote significant attention to the use of relics by the saint or their followers. A high proportion of lives close with the saint's death, a generic description of honourable burial, and a note that many miracles are performed at the body's resting place.<sup>114</sup> That is to say, hagiography frequently invokes but rarely dwells upon relics; relics' very ubiquity, perhaps, allows them to fade into the background. The primary selection criterion for my corpus, then, was texts in which relics are brought to the fore, usually through sustained accounts of the posthumous treatment and miracles of a saint's relics, but also, in Chapter One, of the saint's own interaction with others' relics. The texts selected range widely across the period: two date to the twelfth century (the nun of Barking's *Vie d'Edouard le Confesseur* (1163-89); Guernes de Pont Sainte-Maxence's *Vie de saint Thomas* (1172-74)), one from the turn of the

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<sup>112</sup> Thiry-Stassin, p. 424.

<sup>113</sup> As André Vauchez writes: 'Sans qu'il y ait à proprement parler de rupture entre les deux époques, on assiste [...] à une modification profonde', *La Sainteté en Occident aux derniers siècles du Moyen Âge: d'après les procès de canonisation et les documents hagiographiques* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1981), p. 455. For details of these modifications, see Vauchez, pp. 117, 161, 455, 516, 529.

<sup>114</sup> See for example Simund de Freine's late twelfth-century *Vie de saint Georges*, which recounts George's burial and miracles:

Pristrent le cors u il jut;  
 A l'eglise le portérent  
 E de baume l'embaismérent.  
 Tut de nut fu enfuiz,  
 U maint hom est pus gariz.  
 La pert que Deu cher le tent,  
 Car sovent miracle avent.  
 Sovent oent la li surs,  
 E li contreit vait a curs;  
 Li mu i parole a dreit,  
 E li ciu sovent I veit.  
 (1675-85)

Edited by John E. Matzke in *Les Œuvres de Simund de Freine* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1909), pp. 61-117.

century (Marie's *Vie de sainte Audree*), and two from the thirteenth (Gautier de Coinci's *Miracles de Nostre Dame* (1219-33); the anonymous *Miracles de Mesires Sains Elois* (c. 1250-94)).<sup>115</sup> These texts include saints' lives strictly defined (*Thomas, Elois*), lives and posthumous miracles (*Edouard, Audree*), and a miracle collection (Mary's *Miracles*).<sup>116</sup>

My aim in selecting this corpus has not been to gather a representative sample of French hagiography. The texts selected are a small proportion of the extensive corpus of French hagiography. Their relatively unusual focus on relics also means they are not necessarily representative of the genre as a whole.<sup>117</sup> As stated earlier, however, the aim of this thesis is not to construct an overview of representations of relics in French hagiography, but to perform a series of detailed analyses of individual texts – and their visual and material contexts – through their engagement with relics.<sup>118</sup> In particular, I explore how the inclusion of relics within the narrative blurs distinctions between text and object. I consider each text's connections to a range of extradiegetic artefacts as well as its intradiegetic inclusion of relics, exploring how the interactions between texts and other objects potentially erode distinctions between 'extradiegetic' and 'intradiegetic' worlds. Throughout my analysis there is a particular focus on the visual and material aspects of manuscripts; I also consider (especially in Chapter Three) reliquaries, pilgrim badges, stained glass, architecture, and relics themselves. This methodological focus on materially embedded case studies rather than grand literary narratives is in keeping with ANT, which foregrounds thinking in terms of networks that are about more than intertextual connections and which advocates a quasi-anthropological approach to

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<sup>115</sup> Nun of Barking, *La Vie d'Edouard le Confesseur: poème anglo-normand du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, ed. by Östen Södergård (Uppsala: 1948); Guernes de Pont-Sainte-Maxence, *La Vie de saint Thomas de Canterbury*, ed. by Jacques T. E. Thomas, 2 vols (Louvain: Peeters, 2002), I (2002); Marie, *The Life of Saint Audrey: A Text by Marie De France*, ed. by June Hall McCash and Judith Clark Barban (Jefferson: McFarland, 2006); Gautier de Coinci, *Les Miracles de Nostre Dame*, ed. by V. Frédéric Koenig, 4 vols (Geneva: Droz, 1955-70); *Li Miracles de mesires sains Elois*, ed. by Peigné-Delacourt.

<sup>116</sup> As Cazelles writes, the classification of lives and miracle accounts is fluid rather than strict, *Le Corps de sainteté*, p. 35.

<sup>117</sup> Nor is my corpus a comprehensive picture of all texts that focus on relics.

<sup>118</sup> Although working with a different theoretical framework, Aviad M. Kleinberg also argues for that a small number of detailed case studies are 'more likely to do justice to medieval saints' than a more cursory survey, *Prophets in their own Country: Living Saints and the Making of Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992), p. 9.

networks that ranges across conventional disciplinary boundaries.<sup>119</sup> Rather than confining my analysis to purely textual forms of representation, I consider each text selected as an integral part of material-semiotic networks in which text and things are entangled. In other words, each case study traces networks that incorporate texts, but also bodies (of saints, supplicants, readers), artefacts (relics, reliquaries, books), and spaces (churches, shrines), as well as ranging across different temporalities.

Relics are often engaged in forging connections that produce contact between distant spaces and temporalities. It seems appropriate, then, that the texts which describe them are similarly spatially and temporally interconnected. Chapters One and Four focus on material composed in northern France; Chapters Two and Three feature lives produced in England. While the divergent fortunes of hagiography in Anglo-Norman and continental French verse suggest these regions had their differences, my corpus also points to the unities, exchanges, and networks that connected England and northern France.<sup>120</sup> For example, the above discussion of *Foy*'s interwoven physical and linguistic translation foregrounds how cults often operated trans-regionally: the life of this French saint was translated into Anglo-Norman after her cult was promoted in England by former pilgrims to Conques.<sup>121</sup> As the thesis will demonstrate, through the movement of saints, pilgrims, cults, authors, texts, and manuscripts, my corpus traces interwoven networks extending throughout this interconnected area.

The texts selected also trace temporal connections that extend far beyond their moment of composition. Although I focus on twelfth- and thirteenth-century hagiography, the project's temporal boundaries necessarily range beyond these centuries when it comes to the texts' subject matter and the continued circulation of and responses to these texts in manuscript form. *Foy* exemplifies these temporal

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<sup>119</sup> Networks break down the supposed separation between human linguistic representation and the world, between texts and things, and instead foreground the ways that both language and things articulate the world in intersecting ways. See Latour, 'On Actor-Network Theory', p. 375; Latour, *Pandora's Hope*, pp. 141-42.

<sup>120</sup> See Busby, II, pp. 486-87, 496; Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, 'What's in a Name: The "French" of "England"', in *Language and Culture in Medieval Britain: The French of England, c.1100-c.1500*, ed. by Jocelyn Wogan-Browne (York: York Medieval Press, 2009), pp. 1-13 (pp. 2-3). These northern unities connecting the langue d'oïl could be opposed to a similar set of cultural unities linking southern France (the langue d'oc) with the Mediterranean, see M. Rudolph Bell, and Donald Weinstein, *Saints & Society: The Two Worlds of Western Christendom, 1000-1700* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), pp. 181-83.

<sup>121</sup> Russell, *Verse Saints' Lives*, pp. 45-46.

interconnections: the saint's life and posthumous activities are located in the fourth to ninth centuries, narrated in eleventh-century Latin texts, remade in early thirteenth-century Anglo-Norman verse, copied in a late thirteenth-century manuscript, which was owned in the fourteenth century by a female monastic community.<sup>122</sup> In Chapters Three and Four I consider texts which attest to changing patterns of sanctity. Thomas Becket, the focus of Chapter Three, provides a snapshot of a cult in its infancy, in dialogue with the growing importance of official papal canonisations. Chapter Four considers miracles of the Virgin, whose cult burgeoned in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, fuelled by newly circulating relics post-1204 as well as by new models of piety.<sup>123</sup> Yet both Becket (as martyred bishop) and Mary also attest to enduring interest in how older patterns of sanctity can be remodelled for the needs and interests of new institutions, literary fashions, and readerships. Indeed, the first two chapters deal with twelfth- and thirteenth-century re-imaginings of older saintly models – Eloi, a Merovingian confessor bishop; Audrey, an Anglo-Saxon virgin abbess; Edward the Confessor, a royal saint. These lives offer a window into the temporal as well as material connections these texts generate. They perform a series of translations (in the sense of transformative displacement discussed above) across what might be thought of as temporal boundaries between past and present, as well as translating across material, geographic, and linguistic divisions. As the works selected indicate, vernacular lives defy linear models of development, a fact that further recommends the case study approach I have chosen to adopt. These works are embedded in dense, non-linear networks involving people, things, temporalities, and spaces, as well as other texts.

The thesis is organised into chapters that take as their principle focus a single or small group of texts focusing on a particular saint and a particular type of relic. In each chapter I explore how different types of relics shape encounters with the sacred, and indeed with the text: collections of fragments; whole bodies; blood relics; contact relics of an absent body. Furthermore, each chapter considers how the ANT-inspired approach I use throughout the thesis might be supplemented by the work of

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<sup>122</sup> Of course, these temporal connections could be almost infinitely extended, stretching back to the biblical models of martyrdom Foy imitates, or forward to the manuscript's post-medieval circulation and collection, the text's editions, translations, and scholarly interpretations.

<sup>123</sup> These new models of piety include the increased interest in universal saints, or the Cistercians' championing of Mary as object of devotion. See Miri Rubin, *Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), p. 144

other thinkers: Jane Bennett's focus on the human body; Bill Brown's examination of dynamic things; Michel de Certeau's emphasis on hagiographic spaces; Latour's more recent work on modes of existence.<sup>124</sup> Certain topics, such as the ways relics produce transformative miracles or a desire for various forms of contact with relics, preoccupy all the texts studied. Yet I also ask how these common concerns are refracted in different cults: for example, there is a stark divide between the accessibility of the saint's body in the cults of Becket and Mary. Thus, while attending to the continuities between texts when appropriate, I also seek to draw out each text's particularities – or rather, the particularities of the material-bodily-textual-sacred networks each chapter traces.

Chapter One considers fragmentary corporeal relics and relic collecting in Eloi of Noyon's anonymous life. Drawing on ANT and Bennett's Vital Materialism, I explore how this text negotiates connections and collectives forged between people, things, places, and texts. Eloi is a confessor saint, artisan, and bishop, who collects and enshrines other saints' relics for public display and private use, as well as collecting other artefacts such as books and costly garments. I argue that his sainthood is established precisely through the interpersonal, bodily, temporal, and spatial networks he constructs through his fragmentation, collection, and dispersal of relics and other artefacts. Drawing on Bennett's work on intercorporeality between humans and nonhumans, I consider how Eloi's activities as collector, venerator, and artisan blur boundaries between bodies and things, constructing the saint himself as a complex assembly of human and nonhuman components. This model of the saint as a conglomerate of multiple material elements potentially inflects later readers' responses to *Elois's* sole manuscript. Placing the text's composition in the context of thirteenth-century disputes over the possession of Eloi's relics, I engage closely with the manuscript – its paratextual elements, illustrations, and materiality. I consider how both text and book provide access to Eloi, as well as to experiences of his body, as part of the multifarious networks that communicate the effects of his sanctity to a medieval readership. In particular, Eloi's text, manuscript, and broader cult all engage in various ways with productive spaces left in saintly networks by the

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<sup>124</sup> Jane Bennett, 'Powers of the Hoard: Further Notes on Material Agency', in *Animal, Vegetable, Mineral*, ed. by Cohen, pp. 237-69; Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*; Brown, 'Thing Theory'; Michel de Certeau, *L'Écriture de l'histoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975); Latour, *Enquête*.

removal, circulation, and absence of textual, visual, and bodily fragments. By focusing attention on what is absent, these spaces emphasise how Eloi's saintly presence might extend beyond the boundaries of his body, shrine, or text, and invite continued participation in and supplementation of his saintly networks, revealing a tension between closure and incompleteness, wholeness and fragmentation.

Chapter Two also takes up this tension between wholeness and fragmentation, comparing the treatment of incorrupt whole body relics in two Anglo-Norman lives of Anglo-Saxon royal saints: Edward the Confessor and Audrey of Ely. These texts are concerned in different ways with fraught questions of visibility, accessibility, fragmentation, and bodily integrity. Both lives describe saints whose sanctity rests on the discovery that their corpses remain whole and incorrupt many years after their deaths. These bodies remain concealed within tombs, and become visible only at moments of translation, when enclosure is briefly suspended to offer the body to the gaze of onlookers and readers. Both texts' portrayal of vision engages, in contrasting ways, with questions of desire. *Audree* narrates the repeated frustration of desire to see the saintly body, while *Edouard* explores the ways in which the sacred exceeds the capacity of human onlookers, continuously producing a desire to see more. I consider how the portrayal of these saints' bodies as visible or desirable is inflected by gender (the saints' gender, but also that of their viewers, and of their authors, as both lives were composed by women). The intertwining of virginity, bodily integrity, and incorruption, as well as connections between spiritual and erotic desire established by both texts potentially disrupt conventional notions of gender binaries or heterosexual desire. I argue that analysis of these extraordinary bodies, which are momentarily revealed to the gaze during their translations, can be enriched by Bill Brown's Thing Theory. Brown's exploration of the ways in which things resist or exceed human perception and understanding helpfully illuminates the connections these texts explore between entities founded on vision, as well as highlighting the dynamic, unruly, resistant nature of saintly corpses. Moreover, both saints' entombed bodies reveal how saintly presence and agency might be made available through an accumulation of human and nonhuman entities that mediate and compensate for the body's enclosed invisibility.

Chapter Three focuses on Thomas Becket's blood relics, as portrayed in the saint's twelfth-century life by Guernes, as well as in selected visual and material elements of Becket's early cult, including pilgrim souvenirs, reliquaries, and stained

glass. In contrast to previous chapters, which focus on the refashioning of confessor saints, this chapter tackles the formative years of a newly martyred saint. The nature of Becket's death as a martyrdom renders his blood a particularly potent aspect of his sainthood; moreover, the blood spilled at Becket's martyrdom was distributed as relics to pilgrims. I argue that Becket's blood binds together space, artefacts, and his own body, as well as pilgrims' bodies, in networks that enable experiences of and identification with the saint. I examine blood's multivalent meanings in medieval thinking, as a fluid that exceeds bodily boundaries, and evokes a host of associations from Christ-like sacrifice to the maternal body. I pay particular attention to the relationship between Becket's blood and spatial networks, especially those forged within and through the spaces of Canterbury Cathedral. Drawing on Certeau's exploration of the central role of space in saints' lives, I argue that depictions of Becket's blood emphasise the importance of mobility in the establishment of his sainthood – the movements of the saint, but also of his relics, his venerators, the text, and Guernes himself. I explore how the network helpfully describes the topographies of Becket's cult, making the cathedral a centralising locus, while also allowing the extension of Becket's sacred space beyond Canterbury. I consider how Becket's blood was experienced by pilgrims in artistic and architectural representations as well as in the form of tangible, drinkable blood relics, arguing that these experiences renegotiate the faithful's bodily boundaries and complicate relationships between space and body. I argue that Becket's cult consistently imbricates bodies, spaces, and the saint's blood, transforming pilgrims' bodies into demonstrations of Becket's sainthood, further extending the saint's already expansive networks.

The first three chapters focus on saints with clearly defined cult centres, even as I explore how artefacts and texts work to make the saint accessible beyond this centre. My final chapter deals with a very different type of saint, with no corpse left behind on earth and no single cult centre. I examine Gautier de Coinci's miracles of the Virgin Mary, and his treatment of contact relics, reliquaries, and other alternatives to Mary's corpse. The doctrine of Mary's bodily Assumption means that she leaves no corporeal relics; as such, considering Mary enables discussion of different aspects of sacred networks from those studied in previous chapters, emphasising saintly networks that are less about materiality *tout court* than about forms of agency. In this chapter I turn to Latour's more recent development of his thinking about networks, in particular as they relate to religion; this latest work

moves away from ANT to think instead about modes of existence. Latour's religious mode, I argue, is a helpful way of considering how medieval hagiography reveals religious beings as present in the material world, rather than describing a movement of transcendence, or an absence or distance that has to be overcome. Gautier uses contact relics, reliquaries, images, other saints' bodies, and ordinary believers to generate Mary's presence through repetition and transformation: her corpse's absence is no impediment to experiences of her presence. I argue that although Gautier explores many different entities that manifest Mary's presence, the figure of the relic remains an important interpretive model through which to understand the ways his text envisages its own participation in presenting Mary to its readers. The text itself becomes a kind of relic that encourages its readers to interact with it as a form of veneration, a site of contact between bodies, and a means of commemorative re-enactment that works to render Mary present. Ultimately, I argue, through reading Gautier's text faithful readers are themselves transformed, remade into sites of sacred encounter that participate in making Mary present in the world.

Each chapter, then, explores different aspects of what network thinking can do for hagiography. Despite their differences, all the texts I study share a preoccupation with how the ordinary faithful can encounter the sacred through the material things that make up the world. The case studies I examine mobilise a range of entities that contribute to making the sacred accessible, visible, touchable, or present in more intangible ways: relics, reliquaries, shrines, buildings, bodies, images, books, texts, saints, worshippers, God. The manifold entities that populate medieval hagiography are, I argue, engaged in the continual work of forging, maintaining, and reformulating networks that bring together human and divine, people and things, matter and text. Above all, focusing on relics foregrounds that hagiography not only describes but also actively participates in the diverse networks that constitute and communicate the sacred.



## Chapter One. Sacred Networks: Collecting Relics in the *Miracles de Mesires Sains Eloi*

En pluisours lius, en maintes terres  
 Fist il fiertres et philatieres  
 Où il enclost maintes reliques,  
 Et mains cors sains antiquites  
 (*Miracles de Mesires Sains Eloi*, p. 57b)

Throughout his life, the saint that forms the focus of this chapter, the Merovingian artisan, courtier, and bishop Eloi (or Eligius) of Noyon (c. 588-660), ardently sought out relics for private and public veneration, constructing grand shrines to contain them and facilitating their dissemination. The French text that records his life emphasises the broad scale and varied nature of Eloi's relic interactions. Eloi enshrines 'maintes reliques' and 'mains cors sains' in a variety of reliquary containers. In doing so, relics enclosed within artefacts of his creation proliferate across 'pluisours lius' and 'maintes terres'. This emphasis on multiplicity hints at how Eloi's encounters with relics draw the saint into expansive networks of association between objects, saints, places, and time periods: many ancient saintly relics from many different places are connected, despite their distance, through their common enshrinement in Eloi's reliquaries. At the same time, the enclosure of these sacred bodies within reliquaries of Eloi's own making foregrounds the ways in which these multiple associations are concentrated into a demonstration of Eloi's own sanctity.

Medieval worshippers would have been used to encountering saints in multiple and collective as well as individual forms. Individual reliquaries frequently collected fragments from many different saints and, in turn, these reliquaries often formed part of substantial treasury collections.<sup>125</sup> Medieval churches depicted the community of saints in art and stained glass, as well as in the liturgy. Manuscripts containing multiple saints' lives provide another sort of saintly collectivity

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<sup>125</sup> Hahn, *Strange Beauty*, pp. 13-14, 161.

potentially unfolding in a more private setting.<sup>126</sup> This chapter explores the many processes of collection at work within and around Eloi's French life. The main focus of my argument is a theoretical engagement with how the collection of sacred objects and bodies into new arrangements transforms their meaning. This chapter's first section examines how modern critical work on networks and materiality (in particular Bruno Latour's ANT and Jane Bennett's *Vital Materialism*) can inform the study of medieval relics. I argue that Latour's and Bennett's expansion of the capacity for agency to nonhuman entities offers a productive framework with which to examine the many agencies, from the divine to the nonhuman, at work in producing relic miracles. Moreover, ANT's focus on relationality, on how action is produced through multiple connections between diverse entities, helpfully draws attention to the ways in which Eloi's sainthood is established and communicated through the collectives and associations Eloi forges.

I argue that Eloi's life mobilises narratives, bodies, objects, places, and texts in shifting networks. The second and third sections focus, respectively, on Eloi's work as relic collector and reliquary creator. This work constructs Eloi's own sainthood by inducting him into porous spiritual networks stretching across geographic and temporal divides, in which boundaries between organic and inorganic matter, bodies, objects, and texts dissolve. Processes of collection reorient relationships and inscribe new connections between the various participants in a relic encounter: saints, relics, reliquaries, worshippers, as well as sacred spaces, texts, and readers. Collection is not only about Eloi's collecting and enshrining activities within the text, but also how Eloi's sainthood is communicated through multiple conglomerates of human, nonhuman, and textual elements. I explore how the single manuscript preserving Eloi's life complicates questions of bodily and material saintly presence, by suggesting the manuscript might visually and materially offer contact with Eloi's sanctity to the reader. The movement of objects into and out of collections raises questions of social and political relations as well as spiritual concerns: for example, possessing relics attracts pilgrim donations; distributing relics forges relationships between institutions and individuals, extending the donor's influence. I touch on relic collecting's political implications in the final section, where I discuss the continued transformations Eloi's relics underwent in thirteenth-

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<sup>126</sup> For particular discussion of a vernacular collection of saints' lives, see Chapter Two, pp. 123-25, 189-90.

century Noyon. Examining Eloi's thirteenth-century text, manuscript, and cult suggests that Eloi's saintly networks are not static, but continue to invite acts of supplementation, fragmentation, transformation, participation, and indeed collection.

Eloi exemplifies the ways in which medieval saints' cults weave together shifting spiritual, material, artistic, and political concerns. By the time his life was translated into French in the second half of the thirteenth century this Merovingian saint's cult was well established. The relative maturity of Eloi's sainthood does not imply stagnation in his literary depiction or in his wider cult. Eloi's cult blossomed in the thirteenth century, fuelled by local conflicts as well as by changing approaches to sanctity. In this period rival religious institutions in Noyon vied for control of Eloi's relics and attendant pilgrimage rights. The ensuing papal investigations attest to the increasingly formalised, documentary approaches to sainthood developing in the period.<sup>127</sup> This flourishing interest in the contested cult fuelled artistic production, generating some of Eloi's earliest surviving visual representations in stained glass and manuscript illustrations, as well as a range of textual responses.<sup>128</sup>

Eloi's transforming cult also responded to changing later medieval attitudes to piety and saintliness. When Eloi's Latin life was composed in the seventh century, martyrdom had already declined as a route to sainthood, as persecution grew rarer.<sup>129</sup> By the thirteenth century, confession and a life of good works were well-established paths to sanctity and penance, poverty, and bodily mortification became increasingly emphasised.<sup>130</sup> Eloi's multifarious nature as smith, courtier, and bishop made his sanctity appealing to a diverse range of audiences, providing a focus for communal identities from the French nobility to artisanal confraternities.<sup>131</sup> His holy lifestyle while a layman catered to increased demand for saintly models for the laity to follow.<sup>132</sup> His status as bishop also rehearsed older saintly models of elite

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<sup>127</sup> Erika J. Laquer, 'Ritual, Literacy and Documentary Evidence: Archbishop Eudes Rigaud and the Relics of St. Eloi', *Francia: Forschungen zur westeuropäischen Geschichte*, 13 (1985), 625-37 (p. 629). Vauchez gives an account of the changing nature of sainthood through the increased reliance on papal canonisation documents, p. 7.

<sup>128</sup> Robert Branner, 'Le Rouleau de saint Éloi', *L'Information d'histoire de l'art*, 12.2 (1967), 55-73 (p. 65). See discussion below, pp. 89-91.

<sup>129</sup> Jamie Kreiner, *The Social Life of Hagiography in the Merovingian Kingdom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 58.

<sup>130</sup> Bell and Weinstein, p. 236.

<sup>131</sup> Jean-Christophe Masmonteil, *Iconographie et culte de saint Éloi dans l'Occident médiéval* (Orléans: Rencontre Patrimoine Religieux, 2012), pp. 11, 125.

<sup>132</sup> Bell and Weinstein, pp. 104-05.

ecclesiastical figures.<sup>133</sup> Eloi's career as a craftsman tapped into developing concerns about worldly, material goods and their interface with the sacred.<sup>134</sup> Although the disputes surrounding pilgrimage within Noyon may have fuelled his cult's development, Eloi was not simply a local, ecclesiastical saint: he was adopted among French royalty and his popularity extended beyond the aristocracy as well as beyond French borders.<sup>135</sup> Hagiography participates in the present as much as it commemorates the past, and it is against this thirteenth-century background of flourishing interest in Eloi, this period of transformation and potential conflict, that the French life must be considered.<sup>136</sup>

The *Miracles de Mesires Sains Elois* were composed anonymously in a Picard dialect before 1294.<sup>137</sup> *Elois* translates into some 8000 lines of octosyllabic verse the widely circulated *Vita Eligii*, which is styled as the seventh-century composition of Saint Ouen (or Dado) of Rouen, Eloi's contemporary and friend.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 211.

<sup>135</sup> Masmonteil, p. 150.

<sup>136</sup> See Kreiner, p. 4, on the ways in which hagiography is adapted to various social contexts.

<sup>137</sup> *Li Miracles de mesires sains Elois*, ed. by Peigné-Delacourt, p. 1. All references to *Elois* are to this edition, which has no line numbers: references are given by page and column. Peigné-Delacourt dates *Elois* to the second half of the thirteenth century. References are made to a French life of the saint as early as 1256-58 by witnesses testifying in a trial adjudicating the conflict between the monastery of Saint-Éloi-de-Noyon and the cathedral chapter of Noyon over the possession of Eloi's relics, see Laquer, p. 631. This may be a reference to *Elois*, although it is perhaps more likely to refer to a short picard-vermandois prose version (Inc. 'Sains Eloys fu nes de Limoges et ses peres eut non Eugiers et sa mere Terrice') that circulated widely from the thirteenth century. This unedited *Vie* survives in twenty-two manuscripts, of which at least three date from the thirteenth century: Arras, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 139 (1278); Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine, MS 1716 (end of thirteenth century); Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 20330 (1275-1300). A further three might also be thirteenth-century productions: Lyon, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 867 (c. 1300); Paris, Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, MS 587 (thirteenth-fourteenth century); Le Puy-en-Velay, Bibliothèque du Grand Séminaire, no code (1268-1325). See Anne-Françoise Leurquin and Marie-Laure Savoye, 'Notice de "Vie de saint Eloi, Anonyme"', in *Jonas-IRHT/CNRS Database* <<http://jonas.irht.cnrs.fr/oeuvre/1984>> [accessed 19 July 2017].

<sup>138</sup> Dado of Rouen, *Vita Eligii Noviomagensis*, ed. by Bruno Krusch, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum*, 4 (1902), 634-742. There is evidence that the *Vita* was subject to revisions in the eighth century. See Masmonteil, pp. 9-10. The *Vita* enjoyed widespread circulation across north-western Europe: the *Vita*'s editor Krusch counts nineteen surviving manuscripts from the ninth to the thirteenth centuries, pp. 657-69. Those manuscripts with identifiable provenance are associated with monastic communities across northern France and Switzerland, hinting at how Eloi's appeal extends beyond a strictly local context: see for example Bern, Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS Cod. 48 (eleventh century, possibly Fleury Abbey); Dijon, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 656 (1160-80, Cîteaux Abbey); Zurich, Zentralbibliothek, MS C 10i (ninth century, Abbey of Saint Gall).

While *Elois* follows the *Vita*'s broad brush strokes faithfully, like many other French hagiographic translations, the text both expands and condenses its source. For example, *Elois* frequently omits sermons and doctrinal reflections that do not directly serve the plot.<sup>139</sup> In places, *Elois* expands its source, repeating and reformulating information several times. The passage that opens this chapter neatly demonstrates this tendency towards expansion: the *Vita* has no direct equivalent of these lines. Instead, these lines elaborate the *Vita*'s assertion that 'vir beatus [...] insignia multa sanctorum auro argentoque et gemmis fabricavit sepulchra', expanding on the multiplicity of Eloi's relics in a way the *Vita* does not.<sup>140</sup> As Brigitte Cazelles notes, descriptive expansion is a hallmark of translation into Old French that aligns the saint's life with the techniques of secular vernacular romance.<sup>141</sup> The potential for *Elois* to create new associations not present in the *Vita* through its expansive translation is particularly striking in its descriptions of the luxury materials surrounding relic shrines, as I discuss below.<sup>142</sup>

In contrast to its widely circulated Latin source, *Elois* survives in a single manuscript, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 94, in which it is the sole text.<sup>143</sup> A scribal colophon notes that the manuscript was completed in 1294.<sup>144</sup> By 1591, it was owned by the monastery of Saint-Éloi-de-Noyon, the site of Eloi's original tomb and an important pilgrim destination; an annotation records its loss in this year, when Henri IV pillaged the monastery, and its subsequent retrieval in 1605.<sup>145</sup> Given

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<sup>139</sup> For example: a long sermon preached to the people of Eloi's diocese warning against the continued practice of pagan customs is reduced to a brief report that the saint performed many sermons in the hope of educating 'la simple gent' of his flock (Dado of Rouen, *Vita Eligii*, Book II, Chapter 16, pp. 705-08; *Elois*, pp. 90a-91a). *Elois* also frequently condenses several Latin chapter divisions into one chapter, see Emil Wirtz, *Lautliche Untersuchung der Miracles de St. Eloi* (Marburg: Elwert, 1885), pp. 1-2.

<sup>140</sup> Dado of Rouen, *Vita Eligii*, I. 32, p. 688. Translated by Jo Ann McNamara as 'this [...] blessed man fabricated tombs for the relics of [...] many [saints], with gold and silver and gems' (Dado of Rouen, *Life of St. Eligius of Noyon*, in *Medieval Hagiography: An Anthology*, ed. by Thomas Head (New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 137-67 (p. 150)).

<sup>141</sup> Cazelles, *The Lady as Saint*, p. 17.

<sup>142</sup> See in particular *Elois*, 31b. See below, pp. 94-97.

<sup>143</sup> For a brief description of the manuscript, see Francis Douce, *Catalogue of the Printed Books and Manuscripts Bequeathed by Francis Douce, Esq to the Bodleian Library* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1840), p. 13.

<sup>144</sup> 'En lan del incarnation nostre segneur Dieu Jhesu crist. mil. ii<sup>c</sup>. iiiii<sup>xx</sup>. et. xiiii. [...] fu chis livres fines' (fol. 171<sup>v</sup>).

<sup>145</sup> 'Ce present livre a esté perduz en lan mil v<sup>c</sup> iiiii<sup>xx</sup> et onze, lors que labbaye a qui iappartient fut prise et pilee du temps de la ligue, par henry de bourbon roy de france et de navarre'. The annotation goes on to explain that the book was recognised by a Noyon monk in Paris, and bought back for the monastery in February 1605 (fol. 171<sup>v</sup>).

Eloi's growing thirteenth-century popularity, it is tempting to situate this vernacular translation and manuscript as efforts to cater to new non-Latinate audiences such as the lay aristocracy.<sup>146</sup> Yet the lack of evidence of its transmission beyond this single copy associated with Eloi's monastic cult centre raises questions about the translation's success, circulation, and readership.<sup>147</sup> The circumstances of *Elois*'s thirteenth-century composition will form part of a more extended discussion in section four, but it is important to caution against any simple divisions between Latinate clerical and vernacular lay readers. Just as Eloi was a saint who appealed to ecclesiastic and lay audiences alike, so too *Elois* is a text in which these communities' concerns intermingle.

Despite its title (concocted by its nineteenth-century editor), *Elois* is not a collection of posthumous miracles, but rather recounts the saint's life from his early career to his death from old age. *Elois*'s account of the saint's life is divided into two books of roughly equal length: the first (pp. 17a-64b) details his activities as goldsmith and courtier, while the second (pp. 64b-126b) focuses on Eloi's episcopal

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<sup>146</sup> The manuscript's form – small enough to be portable and of relatively high quality – might support this hypothesis. The manuscript is written in a neat Gothic hand throughout, with no change of scribe. The manuscript's 171 folios have been trimmed, and currently measure approximately 202 × 152 mm. The parchment is of a relatively high quality, and the text is presented in a regular single column of twenty lines, measuring 152 × 120 mm, leaving wide margins of blank page. The entire area within the ink-ruled margins has been used: those lines not completely occupied with text have been filled with red and blue decorative filigree of various designs. Each chapter heading is rubricated in red ink. The manuscript contains one historiated initial (fol. 119<sup>r</sup>), and at least two others are missing (a six-line initial has been removed from fol. 147<sup>r</sup>, and an impression on fol. 10<sup>r</sup> demonstrates that a now-missing folio once also contained a six-line historiated initial); there are thirty-two three-line inhabited initials, one zoomorphic initial (fol. 29<sup>r</sup>) and twenty-eight foliate decorated initials of two to three lines. Gold leaf, pink and blue dominated the colour scheme. See Figures 7-12.

<sup>147</sup> *Elois*'s likely limited medieval readership is mirrored in the lack of critical attention it has received. In addition to Masmonteil's survey of Eloi's visual corpus, Ouen's Latin *Vita* has been the subject of sustained study, especially as a source of information about Merovingian society, ecclesiastical institutions, and hagiography: see Michel Banniard, 'Latin et communication orale en Gaule franque: le témoignage de la *Vita Eligii*', in *Le Septième siècle: changements et continuités: actes du colloque bilatéral franco-britannique tenu au Warburg Institute les 8-9 juillet 1988*, ed. by Jacques Fontaine and J. N. Hillgarth (London: Warburg Institute, 1992), pp. 58-86; Paul Fouracre, 'The Work of Audoenus of Rouen and Eligius of Noyon in Extending Episcopal Influence from the Town to the Country in Seventh-Century Neustria', in *The Church in Town and Countryside*, ed. by Derek Baker, Studies in Church History, 16 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1979), pp. 77-91; Christophe Jauffret, 'La Vie en société à Noyon et dans sa région d'après la *Vita Eligii*', in *Vivre en société au Moyen Âge: occident chrétien VI<sup>e</sup>-XV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, ed. by Claude Carozzi, Daniel le Blévec, and Huguette Taviani-Carozzi (Aix-en-Provence: Publications de l'Université de Provence, 2008), pp. 39-56. Aside from Peigné-Delacourt's 1859 edition, and Wirtz's linguistic study of the poem, I am not aware of any other critical work on the French *Elois*.

duties after his consecration as Bishop of Noyon.<sup>148</sup> Despite the text's formal separation into two books, *Elois* emphasises the many continuities between Eloi's behaviour as layman and religious leader: throughout, Eloi devotes himself to penance and holy works, founding religious institutions and healing the sick through his prayers and his touch. An essential component of this continuity is Eloi's sustained concern for other saints' relics and their appropriate presentation. As this chapter will explore, Eloi's sainthood is consistently constructed and communicated through the many connections he forges with the relics of other saints.

### **Agency, networks, relics**

A cornerstone of my arguments in this chapter is the notion that forging networks of connections between different entities transforms all parties enlisted in these networks. I will consider, for example, the ways in which Eloi's enshrinement of relics reciprocally generates both his own sainthood and that of the saints he enshrines, as well as the ways *Elois*'s manuscript forges visual and material associations that potentially transform the text itself. Foundational here, and across my thesis, is the concept of the network developed by Latour. The network disrupts what Latour identifies as conventional binary oppositions between human-nonhuman, people-material world, subject-object in favour of a relational mode of agency.<sup>149</sup> Central to Latour's Actor-Network-Theory (ANT) is the principle that actions are produced not by thinking (human) subjects acting on inert objects, but through complex networks formed by diverse combinations of entities that are not necessarily human or animate in the traditional sense.<sup>150</sup> As such, ANT redistributes the capacity for agency across nonhuman entities of all kinds as well as granting agency to human individuals.<sup>151</sup> I also draw on the work of Jane Bennett, whose theory of Vital Materialism builds on Latour's work to articulate more thoroughly

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<sup>148</sup> The beginning of the manuscript is missing, so the text starts *in media res*.

<sup>149</sup> See Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, pp. 90, 164, 218. I focus here on Latour's ideas as set out in *Reassembling the Social*, and developed in a number of articles published prior to this work, although Latour continues to explore ideas of networks in slightly different, more ontologically focused directions in more recent work, such as *Enquête*.

<sup>150</sup> Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, p. 10.

<sup>151</sup> Latour, 'On Actor-Network Theory', p. 369; Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, pp. 10, 70, 76.

the fluidity of relationships between people and things, with a particular focus on the human body.<sup>152</sup> Bennett's attention to the body will be especially useful for my discussion of relics in this chapter. As discussed in the introduction, the potential resonances between ANT's connected model of agency and the world populated by lively sacred objects described in medieval hagiography are striking. Given the centrality of network thinking to my project, the first part of this chapter explains some of ANT's key concerns. I first consider ANT's notions of agency in the context of medieval conceptions of materiality, human corporeality, and divinity, before turning to a closer examination of how this theory can illuminate medieval treatments of relics and the hagiographic texts written about them.

ANT asserts that entities of all kinds – not only humans and not only individuals – can be actors; that is, it disrupts distinctions between human and nonhuman entities, granting all the capacity for agency.<sup>153</sup> Latour identifies the conceptual distinction between people and things, subjects and objects as a product of post-Enlightenment modernity.<sup>154</sup> Although Latour does not pursue the historical implications of this critique of modernity, this characterisation suggests that the premodern can provide fruitful ground for exploring the more fluid conceptions of material things that he advocates. As Kellie Robertson points out, the opposition between people and the material world that ANT sets out to dismantle was not necessarily an important one in the Middle Ages.<sup>155</sup> While there was no single medieval conception of materiality, the idea of supposedly inanimate matter displaying vitality or conveying meaning was not strange in the Middle Ages.<sup>156</sup> For example, Bernard Silvestris's *Cosmographia* encapsulates Neoplatonic conceptions of matter's activity, describing Silva, the primal stuff of existence, striving for form:

Silva rigens, informe chaos, [...]

Turbida temperiem, formam rudis, hispida cultum

Optat, et a veteri cupiens exire tumultu,

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<sup>152</sup> Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, p. x.

<sup>153</sup> Latour, 'On Actor-Network Theory', pp. 369, 373.

<sup>154</sup> Latour, *Nous n'avons jamais été modernes: essai d'anthropologie symétrique* (Paris: La Découverte, 1991), pp. 20-22.

<sup>155</sup> Kellie Robertson, 'Medieval Things: Materiality, Historicism, and the Premodern Object', *Literature Compass*, 5 (2008), 1060-80 (p. 1063).

<sup>156</sup> Kellie Robertson, 'Medieval Materialism: A Manifesto', *Exemplaria*, 22 (2010), 99-118 (p. 115).



Artifices numeros et musica vincla requirit.<sup>157</sup>

Here matter is a fertile locus of activity, instability, and change, with a set of desires about its own trajectory and form. Although the rediscovery of Aristotle from the thirteenth century onwards complicated medieval theories of materiality, the sense of matter's 'basic dynamism' explored by Bernard remained dominant throughout the Middle Ages.<sup>158</sup> If network theories seek to uncover the previously ignored activities of things, medieval matter is already active and ready to communicate.

I suggest that matter's potential liveliness and the ways this can be harnessed to the expression of the sacred are explored at length in *Elois*. The text recounts several miracles in which materials ranging from gold to wine miraculously expand in demonstrations of Eloi's holiness (49b).<sup>159</sup> The special responsiveness of matter to Eloi is further explored in another later incident in which Eloi is granted a parcel of land by the king. In this episode, the inhabitants, unaware that they have been transferred to a new overlord, attempt to refine some gold in order to pay their taxes (37a-b); however, the gold refuses to purify until they are informed that their new master – and thus recipient of their taxes – is the saint. In these examples, matter is a site of activity, liable to change, lively, alert, and responsive to saintly presence. It appears to have both a level of control over its own activity (as in the refusal of the gold to purify) and the capacity to respond to Eloi's wishes, working in concert with him to communicate his holiness. This recalls ANT's insistence that agency is not the exclusive preserve of humanity, but is instead distributed across conglomerates of multiple entities.<sup>160</sup>

These examples from *Elois* also point to a potential tension between ANT and the medieval material that forms my corpus: namely, how to account for the

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<sup>157</sup> Bernardus Silvestris, *Cosmographia*, ed. by Peter Dronke (Leiden: Brill, 1978), Megacosmos I. 18-22, p. 7. Translated by Winthrop Wetherbee as 'Silva, intractable, a formless chaos [...] longs in her turbulence for a tempering power, in her crudity for form; in her rankness for cultivation. Yearning to emerge from her ancient confusion, she demands the shaping influence of number and the bonds of harmony' (*The Cosmographia of Bernardus Silvestris* (New York: Colombia University Press, 1990), p. 67).

<sup>158</sup> Caroline Walker Bynum, *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe* (New York: Zone Books, 2011), pp. 234-46.

<sup>159</sup> The miraculous expansion of matter recalls saintly and biblical patterns, such as Christ's own multiplication of loaves and fishes at the feeding of the five thousand: Matthew 14. 16-21, Mark 6. 37-44, Luke 9. 13-17, John 6. 5-13; Hahn also links this expansion of materials to an Apocryphal story of Christ enlarging a wooden beam that Joseph has cut too short, *Strange Beauty*, p. 33.

<sup>160</sup> Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, pp. 75-76.

relationship between the divine and the material world. Latour emphasises the ontological flatness of the networked world he sketches. In ANT there are no predetermined hierarchies between entities of different kinds; no entities, human, divine, or otherwise, have an inherent command over others.<sup>161</sup> As such, he discards any conception of an omnipotent, omnipresent, transcendent creator God.<sup>162</sup> If there is a God, for Latour, he has no special privilege over other nonspiritual entities.<sup>163</sup> God is not a transcendent ‘Spirit from above’, but one entity among many, who must ‘translate, compromise, and negotiate’ with the interconnected multitude of elements that compose the world.<sup>164</sup> Religion, then, in Latour’s terms, attends not to transcendence, a movement above and beyond the world, but to immanence, the making present of the spiritual in what is proximate.<sup>165</sup> I return in Chapter Four to Latour’s ideas about transcendence, divine presence, and religion.<sup>166</sup> For now, I focus on how medieval conceptions of an all-powerful, all-pervading God and the material world as a transcendent ontological hierarchy both challenge and resonate with Latour’s ideas.

Once again, there is a sense here that Latour is dismantling modern distinctions (between transcendence and proximity, omnipotent God and multiple agencies) that were not necessarily important in the Middle Ages. Medieval understandings of the world, the divine, and the human insist on precisely the sort of originary, omnipresent God that Latour resists. Yet at the same time these understandings often also make room for the agencies of a multitude of active, interconnected entities and convey a sense of the divine as proximate and present. The model of the *scala naturae*, for example, proposes an understanding of materiality that both resonates with Latour’s position and is at odds with it. This model positions the medieval object within a world imagined as a Great Chain of Being that unites all created matter – human and nonhuman, organic and inorganic –

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<sup>161</sup> Latour, *Pandora’s Hope*, pp. 297-98.

<sup>162</sup> Latour, “‘Thou Shalt Not Take the Lord’s Name in Vain’”, pp. 228-29.

<sup>163</sup> Latour, *Inquiry*, p. 315; Latour, *Pandora’s Hope*, p. 298. See discussion in Miller, *Speculative Grace*, pp. 18-19, 21.

<sup>164</sup> Latour, “‘Thou Shalt Not Take the Lord’s Name in Vain’”, p. 219; Miller, *Speculative Grace*, p. 47.

<sup>165</sup> Latour, “‘Thou Shall Not Freeze-Frame’”, p. 35; Latour, “‘Thou Shalt Not Take the Lord’s Name in Vain’”, p. 219.

<sup>166</sup> See pp. 242-305.

with God.<sup>167</sup> The *scala* understands the world as governed by ontological hierarchy: the world rises from non-sensing rocks through plants and animals to human beings, who combine sensory, physical attributes with intellectual and spiritual capacities, to the ranks of angels, and finally to God himself.<sup>168</sup> Yet within this continuum of being, differences between categories of entity are minimised, appearing as differences of degree rather than of kind, suggesting a fluid understanding of how divine, human, and nonhuman entities are defined. Within God's creation, all entities, whether material, immaterial, organic, or inorganic, are essentially interconnected, united in creation, and connected to the divine. While God occupies a commanding role in this interconnected world, he is not beyond or outside the world, but firmly present within it. The presence of God in the world, in all entities, is emphasised in the conception of the world as the Book of Nature, which considers all entities, including the nonhuman, to display forms of lively activity that communicate divine truths.<sup>169</sup> Bestiary and lapidary traditions emphasise the liveliness of even supposedly inanimate things such as stones, describing, for example, how 'firestones' burst into flame when they draw near to each other.<sup>170</sup> The moralising explanations accompanying the description of animals and minerals in bestiaries and lapidaries establish a sense of the material world as full of divine meaning, ready to be imparted to those who know how to examine it.<sup>171</sup> The agency

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<sup>167</sup> Kellie Robertson, 'Exemplary Rocks', in *Animal, Vegetable, Mineral*, ed. by Cohen, pp. 91-121 (p. 95). The thirteenth-century encyclopaedia by Bartholomaeus Anglicus offers a particularly systematic and influential exploration of the *scala*, exploring in nineteen books all of creation from God to angels, humans, animals, plants, and rocks, see *De proprietatibus rerum, Books 1-4*, ed. by Baudouin Van den Abeele (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007). Bennett explicitly rejects the *scala naturae* model as useful for her purposes, as it inscribes hierarchical distinctions between humans and other entities, *Vibrant Matter*, pp. 10, 112.

<sup>168</sup> Robertson, 'Exemplary Rocks', pp. 98-99.

<sup>169</sup> Andrew Cole, 'The Call of Things: A Critique of Object-Oriented Ontology', *Minnesota Review*, (2013), 106-18 (pp. 109-10). See also Shannon Gayk and Robin Malo, 'The Sacred Object', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 44 (2014), 457-67 (p. 461).

<sup>170</sup> Moreover, it assigns them sexual attributes (the stones are 'male' and 'female'), further confusing boundaries between living and non-living entities. See the Second-Family Bestiary, Chapter 123: 'Cum autem casu appropinquaverit femina masculo, statim ignis accenditur, ita ut ardeant omnia quae sunt circa illum montem'. Translated by Willene B. Clark as 'When, however, the female should happen to approach the male, at once fire is kindled, so that everything around the mountain is ablaze' (*A Medieval Book of Beasts* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006), pp. 219-20).

<sup>171</sup> See Allen, pp. 133-34; Emma Campbell, 'Sound and Vision: Bruno Latour and the Languages of Philippe de Thaon's *Bestiaire*', *Category Crossings: Bruno Latour and Medieval Modes of Existence*, ed. by Marilynn Desmond and Noah Guynn (= *The Romanic Review*, 111.1 (forthcoming 2020)); Robinson, 'Exemplary Rocks', p. 94.

of medieval things is thus consistently entangled with that of the omnipresent divine. The medieval world repeatedly renders the divine present and proximate, albeit in different ways to those imagined by Latour.

The medieval enmeshing of God and the material world is anchored by Christ's Incarnation, the Word become flesh, which emphasises that God is part of, not external to, creation.<sup>172</sup> The Incarnation writes matter's ability to embody God into the heart of human salvation; moreover, this doctrine asserts the presence of the divine not only in materiality, but specifically in human corporeality.<sup>173</sup> The specificity of the human body within the material world is a particular point of tension between network theories and medieval thought.<sup>174</sup> While Latour pays no particular attention to the body as such, he emphasises that humanity has no inherent ontological privilege.<sup>175</sup> Bennett's development of Latour offers a more focused consideration of what network thinking means for the human body, asserting the lack of difference between human bodies and other things in order to dissipate, as Latour does, predetermined hierarchies that privilege or single out the human.<sup>176</sup> While Bennett's more body-focused flat ontology thus does not account for the special place of medieval human bodies in creation, her application of Latour's insights to human bodies nevertheless helpfully signposts how thinking in terms of nonhuman agency might illuminate the interwoven relationships between the human body and the rest of the material world.

For Bennett, things emerge as vibrant, dynamic agents with their own trajectories and forces, while people emerge as redolent with 'thing-ness', their bodies porous conglomerates of human and nonhuman elements, regulated by bacteria, augmented with prostheses.<sup>177</sup> The potential of bodies to incorporate and forge connections with the nonhuman is foregrounded in the Middle Ages by conceptions of the body as a microcosm of the universe, entangling it with the

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<sup>172</sup> Diarmaid MacCulloch, *A History of Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years* (London: Allen Lane, 2009), p. 416.

<sup>173</sup> Sarah Beckworth, *Christ's Body: Identity, Culture and Society in Late Medieval Writings* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 5; Sara Ritchey, *Holy Matter: Changing Perceptions of the Material World in Late Medieval Christianity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014), pp. 2-3, 11-12.

<sup>174</sup> For discussion of medieval bodies, see Introduction, pp. 26-27.

<sup>175</sup> Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, pp. 16, 219.

<sup>176</sup> Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, pp. x, xvi, 9-10, 23-24.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2-4, 14.

natural world.<sup>178</sup> A sense of how medieval bodies might be both interconnected with nonhuman materiality and infused with a hierarchical particularity is encapsulated in Michael Camille's exploration of biblical stories of humanity's creation.<sup>179</sup> Humans are created from clay: they are not substantively different from the rest of the material world. Primed by this creation myth, medieval readers are already alive to the sense of a person's thingness that Bennett elaborates. Yet humanity is also made in God's image – a resemblance heightened by the Incarnation – bodily form setting humans apart from other material beings as already closer to the divine. Seen in medieval perspective, the same body signifies both similitude to and particularity from the rest of the material world.

What this overview of diverse medieval conceptions of materiality, divinity, and corporeality emphasises is a consistent medieval concern for the enmeshed presence of the divine in the world and in human corporeality, through which entities of all kinds are interconnected – a concern that nonetheless preserves a sense of ontological hierarchy. Putting medieval culture into conversation with ANT highlights the ways in which medieval things anticipate the lively, networked, material multitude proposed by ANT, as well as pushing back at some its pronouncements about religion and hierarchy. For medieval Christianity, acknowledging the lively world of things is not incompatible, as it is for Latour or Bennett, with the presence of an all-powerful God.

Indeed an ANT-inflected model of networked, distributed agency can helpfully account for God's omnipresence in the medieval world while allowing room for a multitude of other nondivine agencies. This is particularly true, I will argue, of the encounters with saintly relics described in hagiography. ANT's assertion that artefacts can exhibit agency and that divisions between these active artefacts and human subjects are not clear-cut is less a revelation than a confirmation of many medieval relic practices: relics defy categorisation, being at once people and

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<sup>178</sup> For an example of medieval explorations of the body as microcosm, see Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum*, Book IV. For discussion, see Akbari and Ross, p. 10; Green, pp. 3-4.

<sup>179</sup> As recounted in Genesis 1. 24-27 'Dixit quoque Deus: Producat terra animam viventem in genere suo [...] Et creavit Deus hominem ad imaginem suam: ad imaginem Dei creavit illum, masculum et feminam creavit eos' ('And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind [...] So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them). See Michael Camille, *The Gothic Idol: Ideology and Image-Making in Medieval Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 33-34.

things.<sup>180</sup> Focusing on one particular miracle from Eloi's life offers an illustrative example of the ways in which considering relics in the light of ANT can productively untangle the nature and activities of the medieval relic, as well as how relics provide a helpful demonstration of ANT's claims.

The saint's first posthumous miracle, *Elois* recounts, revolves around the fate of his body after death. Against the fierce opposition of the people of Noyon, who wish to entomb their bishop in their city, Queen Bathilde seeks to translate Eloi's corpse to her foundation at Chelles (122a). When Bathilde's attendants attempt to transfer Eloi's body, it miraculously becomes too heavy to move; in contrast, when the Noyonnais make their attempt, the saint's remains allow themselves to be lifted with ease (123a-b).<sup>181</sup> Theologically, this miracle, like all saintly miracles, is the work of God. In Augustine's formulation, for example, relic miracles are channels for concretely expressing God's will and presence in the world.<sup>182</sup> *Elois* accordingly frames the corpse's refusal to move as the work of God, as the gathered crowds address God, exclaiming:

Que tes euvres sont delitables,  
E ti miracle precieus,  
Et en tes sains es glorieus.  
(124a)

Saints and their miracles are here demonstrations of God's glory. Yet *Elois* also complicates this picture, writing that it pleases the relics to remain in Noyon: 'li cors sains se lui pléust' (123b). This formulation focuses attention on the ways in which corporeal relics, as vital components of the saint, embody continuity with the saintly person after death, while also having an agency and desire of their own. Moreover, while the agency Bennett and Latour ascribe to matter is impersonal, this miracle highlights the capacity of medieval sacred objects for more anthropomorphic agencies (producing miracles, expressing desires, moving).<sup>183</sup> The miracle of Eloi's

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<sup>180</sup> Geary, 'Sacred Commodities', p. 169.

<sup>181</sup> Excessive heaviness, expressing the unwillingness of the saint's body to move, is a common hagiographic trope associated with physical translation. Sigal, 'Le Déroulement des translations', p. 223.

<sup>182</sup> Benedicta Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind: Theory, Record and Event 1000-1215* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1982), p. 32.

<sup>183</sup> Bennett at times shies away from talking about things 'acting' to refer more obliquely to their 'trajectories, propensities, or tendencies' Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, pp. viii, 69; Jane Bennett, 'A Vitalist Stopover on the Way to a New Materialism', in *New Materialisms*:

heaviness is not only God's work, but also that of Eloi, and of his relics. Hagiography routinely depicts saints, relics, artefacts, and so on not as mere conduits for divine agency, but as miraculous agents in their own right.

ANT offers a useful way of thinking about the many intertwined elements active in producing an encounter with a relic, as well as the ways that medieval hagiography negotiates questions of the immanent presence of the sacred in saintly bodies and artefacts. Latour consistently emphasises the plurality of networks: the world is composed of (shifting, contingent) collectives, groupings, and assemblages of human and nonhuman entities, each with their own trajectories, associations, and agencies.<sup>184</sup> Agency is thus always multiple, distributed across many assembled entities of which none is inherently in command. As Latour puts it, any action is not the product of a single, unified intentionality, but is rather 'a node, a knot, and a conglomerate of many surprising sets of agencies that have to be slowly disentangled'.<sup>185</sup> Returning to the miracle of Eloi's stymied translation, we might similarly focus on disentangling the conglomerated agencies at work here. Seen from this angle, this passage focuses attention not only on the heaviness of Eloi's corpse, but also on the desire of the faithful to possess the relics; the effort of their bodies to lift the corpse; the space of the church building or the waiting tomb; the corporate identities of the Frankish monarchy or the Noyon diocese; the saint resident in the community of Heaven; the omnipresent God; and even the text, author, translator, and book that narrate the encounter. Reading the relic-encounter through ANT thus focuses attention on how a relic, a saint, a text, a reliquary, or indeed God, does not function in isolation, but rather as part of a collective of actors (or 'actants'). A medieval concept of God is not therefore incompatible with a lively world of changeable matter, active artefacts, and miraculous bodies. Because action is distributed, multiple agencies can operate at the same time: relics, bodies, and nonhuman objects can shape the course of action without excluding divine agency. Likewise, God is not the sole driver of miracle, but grants room to the multitude. This distributed, multiple, decentred model of agency, in other words, offers a framework that accounts for the presence in a relic encounter of an omnipotent

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*Ontology, Agency and Politics*, ed. by Diana Coole and Samantha Frost (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), pp. 47-69 (p. 47). Bynum also points out the literal nature of medieval sacred objects' agency, *Christian Materiality*, p. 282.

<sup>184</sup> Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, pp. 2, 116, 254.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 44, 61.

divine being, or a saint in heaven, or the human faithful, or the material properties of saintly bodies, spaces, artefacts, without unduly privileging any one element or erasing their differences. In this, ANT is perhaps more faithful to hagiographic descriptions of relics and miracles than mainstream medieval theology.<sup>186</sup>

An encounter with a relic, then, is an encounter with a conglomerate of interdependent material, divine, human, nonhuman, organic, and inorganic elements. Latour's conception of the network draws particular attention to the specificities, contingencies, and mobilities of these groupings. In Latour's terminology, networks (as opposed to other terms that account for the multiplicity of entities and agencies such as collective, conglomerate, grouping, assemblage) are concerned with the tracing of connections that transform all participants.<sup>187</sup> Networks are not fixed: rather they are made up of connections that need to be actively established and maintained by their constituent elements.<sup>188</sup> Networks are also infinitely extendible; they are limited not by scale, but by the number of connections they trace. New associations can always be followed, drawing the network and its participants into new configurations, outcomes, and meanings.<sup>189</sup> Indeed, in doing this work of

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<sup>186</sup> That is to say, hagiography ascribes relics an agency of their own as well as acknowledging God's role, not figuring them solely as conduits for divine will, as in the doctrinal view summarised by Aquinas: 'ipse Deus hujusmodi reliquias convenienter honorat, in earum præsencia miracula faciendo [...] corpus insensibile non adoramus propter seipsum, sed propter animam [...] et propter Deum'. 'God himself grants honour to [saints'] relics by performing miracles when they are present [...] We do not venerate a lifeless body for what it is in itself, but by reason of the soul [...] by reason also of God' (*Summa theologiae*, ed. and trans. by Colman E. O'Neill, III. 25. 6, pp. 202-05).

<sup>187</sup> Latour, 'On Actor-Network Theory', p. 378; Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, p. 128. It should be noted that while Latour uses 'assemblage' as a conceptually neutral term, Latour's concern for heterogeneous collectives, which he explores through networks, shares much with the theoretical concept of the assemblage set out by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, see *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by Brian Massumi (London: Continuum, 1987), especially pp. 4, 8, 88-90. Indeed, Bennett's work often draws on Deleuze and Guattari's conception of the assemblage alongside Latour's work, see *Vibrant Matter*, pp. 5, 23-24. Martin Müller argues that while ANT and assemblage thinking have their differences, the distinction between the two is often more methodological than conceptual: ANT is primarily concerned with concrete case studies, in contrast to assemblage thinking's more philosophical focus, 'Assemblages and Actor-Networks: Rethinking Socio-Material Power, Politics and Space', *Geography Compass*, 9.1 (2015), 27-41 (p. 30). ANT's focus on concrete case studies renders it more appropriate for this thesis's task of considering individual hagiographic texts as embedded entities. For an application of assemblage thinking to medieval literature, in particular medieval bodies, see Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Medieval Identity Machines* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), especially pp. 46-50.

<sup>188</sup> Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, p. 132.

<sup>189</sup> Latour, 'On Actor-Network Theory', p. 371; for discussion, see Müller, p. 35.



tracing, retracing, initiating, and maintaining connections, network constituents do not changelessly transmit the meaning or outcome of a network, but rather transform what they transport, the entities they forge connections with, and indeed themselves.<sup>190</sup> Latour emphasises that to think with ANT is to focus not only on collectives or connections, but precisely on their transformations: in ANT all network participants are mediators, that is, they ‘transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry’.<sup>191</sup> ANT’s insistence that all entities enlisted in networks have an effect foregrounds the specificity of any grouping or network. The outcome, goals, or meaning of a network is liable to shift, drift, or be translated in new ways by its mediating constituents.<sup>192</sup> The tracing of new connections with other mediators transforms in new ways.

Latour’s emphasis on the transformative connections effected in and through the network is richly suggestive for the study of relics, as well as for the analysis of the saints’ lives that depict them. Importantly, as per Latour, the scale and composition of these elements can vary: they might be tightly physically integrated, as in the containment of a relic within a reliquary or shrine; they might be distributed through space and time.<sup>193</sup> A close examination of a particular passage from *Elois* demonstrates the ways in which an ANT-inflected concept of the network illuminates the entangled relationships between saints, relics, spaces, and texts. As the first book draws to a close, the text enumerates a list of saints for whom Eloi has constructed shrines:

Che fu saint Piat de Seclin,  
 Saint Germain et saint Severin,  
 Saint Quentin, saint Maximien,  
 Saint Lucien, saint Julien,  
 Saint Lolien, sainte Columbe.  
 Ne dois pas oublier la tombe  
 Qu’il fist sur sainte Geneviere  
 [...]  
 A saint Martin méismement

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<sup>190</sup> Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, p. 128.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>192</sup> Latour, ‘On Technical Mediation’, pp. 31-35.

<sup>193</sup> Latour, ‘On Actor-Network Theory’, p. 371; Latour, ‘On Technical Mediation’, p. 36.

De Tours ouvra si noblement,  
 [...]
   
Et après, la tombe saint Brisse  
 (57b-58c)

This list stresses how Eloi's activity gathers together a multiplicity of other saints, forging new associations among them.<sup>194</sup> The saints chosen vary in their time of activity and route to sanctity: the list includes men and women, martyrs and confessors, with dates ranging from the third to the sixth centuries.<sup>195</sup> While the idea of saints acting in concert as a community in Heaven was a familiar one in the Middle Ages, the naming of these specific saints also creates a more concrete impression of particular saints working together. There is no precedent for grouping this community of saints together: this community exists through Eloi's actions.<sup>196</sup> Both Eloi's craft and the text trace new connections between these disparate figures, united by the material artefacts Eloi creates into a unified saintly community: in Latour's terms, here saint and text forge a new network of saintly connections.

This list of names traces intertextual associations as well as associations between saints insofar as each name acts as a placeholder for an unspoken narrative. These intertextual connections have particular resonance in the context of thirteenth-century vernacular hagiography: the lives of Quentin, Genevieve, and Martin were all subjects of thirteenth-century verse French translations, lives in which Piat, Lucian, and Brice also appear.<sup>197</sup> This list evokes the stories of each saint named,

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<sup>194</sup> In addition, elsewhere *Elois* recounts Eloi's enshrinement of Saint Denis (58b), Crispin and Crispinian (78a-79a). Of those saints listed, Quentin (73a-78b), Piat (78b) and Lucian of Beauvais (79a-b) all receive a more lengthy treatment of Eloi's discovery and re-containment of their relics elsewhere in the text.

<sup>195</sup> The saints referred to can be identified as: Piat, martyr and evangelist (d. c. 286); Germain of Paris, confessor bishop (496-576); Severin d'Agaune, confessor bishop and abbot (430-c. 507); Quentin, martyr and evangelist (d. c. 287); Maximian, companion to Lucian (d. c. 290); Lucian de Beauvais, martyr and evangelist (d. c. 290); Julian, companion to Lucian (d. c. 290); Columba of Sens, virgin martyr (257-273); Genevieve, virgin (c. 420-c. 500); Martin of Tours, confessor and evangelist (c. 316/336-397); Brice, companion to Martin (c. 370-444). Lolian remains unidentified, as no other recordings of the name exist.

<sup>196</sup> Although there are existing groupings within this larger textual gathering: Maximian and Julian were Lucian's disciples; Lucian and Piat were part of Quentin's twelve evangelising companions; Brice was Martin's companion.

<sup>197</sup> Huon le Roi de Cambrai, *La Vie de saint Quentin*, ed. by Arthur Långfors and Werner Söderhjelm, Acta Societatis Scientiarum Fennicae, 38 (Helsinki: Imprimerie de la Société de littérature finnoise, 1909); *La Vie de sainte Geneviève de Paris, poème religieux*, ed. by Lennart Bohm (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1955); Péan Gatineau, *Leben und Wunderthaten des Heiligen Martin*, ed. by Werner Söderhjelm (Tübingen: Litterarischer

stretching across space and time. *Elois*'s list of saints also demonstrates how the text participates in networks that include entities of a more material or physical nature. The multifarious nature of the network as described by Latour highlights the many permutations of the connections that relic encounters involve: a network can incorporate entities of all kinds, be they material, spatial, bodily, textual, or immaterial. Associations can be traced between any of these entities, regardless of type. From an ANT perspective, things and texts are not therefore automatically distinct: things and text participate in the same translations, associations, and transformations.<sup>198</sup> This association of textual and nontextual entities is brought home by *Elois*'s list. The enumeration of saintly names as a list recalls other ways in which medieval texts participate in sacred practice through the collection of saints' names – for example in calendars, amulets, relic-lists – emphasising the ways text is embedded in broader temporal, spatial, and bodily contexts. When it comes to medieval religious culture, text is never 'purely' textual.<sup>199</sup> Indeed, Eloi's participation in the formation of this network through his craft extends the list's connections into the realms of the spatial and the bodily. The saintly relics Eloi enshrines forge a broad network of sacred sites and objects in the form of the tombs he crafts, which are distributed throughout northern France, from Seclin to Tours.<sup>200</sup>

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Verein in Stuttgart, 1896). Like *Elois*, in contrast to the generally widespread diffusion of their Latin sources, these French texts survive in single or rare manuscript exemplars. *Quentin* survives in a single manuscript, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 6447 (fols 308<sup>v</sup>-22<sup>v</sup>, c. 1275). *Geneviève* survives in three manuscripts: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS latin 5667 (fols 35<sup>r</sup>-95<sup>v</sup>, end of thirteenth century); Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 13508 (fols 1<sup>r</sup>-27<sup>r</sup>, fourteenth century); Paris, Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, MS 1283 (fols 80<sup>r</sup>-113<sup>v</sup>, fourteenth century). *Martin* survives in a single manuscript, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 1043, dated to the end of the thirteenth century. *Quentin*'s twelve companions, including Lucian and Piat are listed in *Quentin*, ll. 137-50. Brice was *Martin*'s long term companion, see for example *Martin*, l. 3627, as Brice founds a funerary church over *Martin*'s body. Moreover, these saints also appear short prose accounts in legendaries throughout the thirteenth century. These legendaries form new networks, which often trace similar groupings to that described in *Elois*. For instance, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS nouvelles acquisitions françaises 23686 (thirteenth century) contains lives of *Quentin* (fols 103<sup>r</sup>-104<sup>r</sup>) and *Martin* (fols 146<sup>v</sup>-47<sup>r</sup>) as well as Eloi himself (now missing, but once between fol. 125 and fol. 126, according to the medieval table of contents).

<sup>198</sup> Latour, 'On Actor-Network Theory', p. 375.

<sup>199</sup> On relic-lists, see Luxford, pp. 69, 76, 78.

<sup>200</sup> Germain's relics resided in Paris, Severin's at Château-Landon, Piat's at Seclin, *Quentin*'s at Saint-Quentin, Lucian's at Beauvais, along with those of Maximian and Julian, Genevieve's in Paris and Columba's at Sens. On the geographic extent of Eloi's constructions, see Brigitte Mejins, 'Martyrs, Relics and Holy Places: The Christianization of the Countryside in the Archdiocese of Rheims during the Merovingian Period', in *Paganism*

This list suggests how the movement of Eloi's body as he travels through the region, as well as the concrete traces of his craft that he leaves behind, form a sacred topography linking together diverse saints, relics, shrines, and institutions. Eloi's enshrining activities establish expansive sacred networks in which (as in the networks ANT describes) people, things, places, and texts are interconnected rather than distinct categories.

The connections forged within these networks transform the saints, spaces, and texts that participate in them, by allowing these entities to share qualities and produce shifts in outcome. Indeed, *Elois's* list provides a concrete illustration of Latour's claim that the network is not a fixed thing, but a dynamic series of connections, translations, and traces that must be retraced.<sup>201</sup> The list of saints enumerated in *Elois* is transferred from the work's Latin source, although in the course of this transferral there is a certain displacement, as the saints are reordered: Eloi retraces, and thus transforms, the connections the *Vita* traces. The *Vita* reads: 'id est Germani, Severini, Piatonis, Quintini, Lucii, Genovefae, Columbae, Maximiani et Loliani, Iuliani'.<sup>202</sup> This order of presentation does not appear to conform to any predefined schema: the saints are not listed according to chronology, feast day, or typology. The rearrangement of this order in *Elois* affirms that the text itself participates in the network, mediating and translating (in Latour's sense of transforming and displacing) what it transmits. The re-ordering responds to the formal demands of the vernacular verse, a need to maintain the text's octosyllabic rhyming couplets: the verse French text has an agency of its own that shapes this transformation process.

The realignment of the saintly names gathered together in the list also acts to draw out or assert new connections between them. In retracing the network traced first by Eloi's body, then by the Latin *Vita*, *Elois* creates new associations, transforms the list's 'outcome' and the qualities of the saints embedded within it. The variety of saints accommodated within the list emphasises the qualities that Eloi might share with them – and the ways they might compensate for the attributes Eloi himself lacks. Like Eloi, Severin and Genevieve are known for freeing prisoners.

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in the Middle Ages: Threat and Fascination, ed. by Carlos Steel, John Marenbon, and Werner Verbeke (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2012), pp. 109-38 (p. 132).

<sup>201</sup> Latour, 'On Actor-Network Theory', p. 378; Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, p. 132.

<sup>202</sup> Dado of Rouen, *Vita Eligii*, I. 32, p. 688.

Again like Eloi, Quentin and his companions are associated with the conversion of the pagan peoples of France. Within the sacred network he traces, Eloi forges associations of resemblance stretching across time and space that concretise his *imitatio* of these saintly patterns of behaviour. That many of the saints listed are martyrs (Piat, Quentin, Lucian, Maximian, Julian, Colomba) might compensate for the fact Eloi is not himself a martyr – or throw this fact into sharper relief. I explore the relationship between Eloi, relics, and martyrdom in greater detail below, but it is worth noting here the work performed by the text in accommodating differences between these types of sanctity. The re-arranged French list includes confessor saints (Germain, Severin) within its catalogue of martyrs, thereby resisting strictly typological categorisation. In both Latin and French, verbal connections between the presentations of the saints' names highlight the resonances between them: while the genitive forms of the Latin names link them grammatically, the French creates a similar sense of the interconnectedness of its saints through rhyme and a repetition of 'saint(e)'. Through participation in this textual network, all routes to sanctity – including Eloi's holy activities – are validated, without softening the differences between them.

The text's depictions of the intermingled spatial, bodily, and material connections formed through Eloi's craft, then, are invested not only in forging links between other saints and spaces, but also in constructing and enhancing Eloi's own sainthood. *Elois* affirms Eloi's active role as part of the list: 'Ne dois pas oublier la tombe | Qu'il fist'. The pronoun 'il', referring to Eloi, ensures he is included in this saintly company. Eloi's artisanal work draws him into proximity with his saintly forebears, suggesting that through his craft he too may participate in this saintly community, absorbing something of their prestige. The list not only enfolds Eloi ('il') within its saintly enumeration, but also reaches out in appeal to the reader ('Ne dois pas oublier'). Eloi's efforts to enshrine the relics of earlier saints allow him to make this community present on earth, in particular to the reader of *Elois*. This list, then, holds together a potentially boundless network of associations, tracing connections between texts, bodies, artefacts, spaces, and the text's readers, all in service of affirming and communicating Eloi's sainthood.

Reading this passage in conjunction with ANT highlights many of the network's important features. Networks trace dynamic, shifting, transformative connections between entities of all kinds. They are a way of accounting for the

agency of all entities no matter their ontological status, as well as the mediating and transformative capacities of those entities. More broadly, networks also helpfully pinpoint the ways in which medieval hagiography describes sacred agency as immanent, distributed, and multiple, including divine agency while also decentring it. Above all, as this passage suggests, thinking with networks focuses attention on how hagiographic texts do not operate in a separate, purely discursive realm. Such texts participate in the networks that form around relics, both transforming what they transmit and being transformed in their turn.

## Collecting

The network of saints that Eloi enshrines shows how his sainthood is produced not in isolation, but through the transformative associations he traces with other saintly bodies and objects. In this section I examine more closely how *Elois* reflects on and enhances Eloi's networked sainthood through his relic collections. I argue that Eloi's collecting forges multiple overlapping networks: the saint not only assembles the entities within his collection into new networks, but also establishes connections that assert his own participation in those networks. Eloi's collecting translates relics into new settings, but he is in turn transformed, made saintly, by his collection. Thus the multiple human and nonhuman elements in his collection collectively produce Eloi's sainthood.

While Eloi draws saints together into interpersonal, material, spatial networks throughout the text, *Elois*'s treatment of Saint Quentin engages particularly forcefully with an interconnected, networked model of sainthood.<sup>203</sup> Visiting Saint-Quentin, Eloi declares that Quentin's body is not located at the site of his traditional veneration and unearths his saintly forebear's true grave (74a-76b). In contrast to the Vermandois locals who mistakenly venerate the wrong location, Eloi displays privileged access to and knowledge of Quentin's relics that accentuate his own holy

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<sup>203</sup> At alternative version of Eloi's invention and translation of Quentin's body that both resembles and differs from that presented in *Elois* is narrated in the thirteenth-century *Quentin*, 2763-3110. The broad strokes of the episode are the same in *Quentin*, although unsurprisingly the focus is shifted from an exploration of Eloi's sanctity to an affirmation of Quentin's. For example, Eloi's desire to extract relics from Quentin's body is oriented towards the honour bestowed by the relics, rather than by Eloi's actions: Eloi wants to take 'Aucune cose por moustrer | Et por aucun liu honerer' (*Quentin*, 3053-54).

nature. Eloi repeatedly exhibits knowledge of relics available only to him: he discovers and reveals the bodies of many lost and forgotten saints, ‘Que d’aus n’estoit nule memoire’ (72a). There is, *Elois* suggests, a special resonance between Eloi and other saintly bodies that allows him to reveal what remains inaccessible and beyond the knowledge of ordinary people.<sup>204</sup> The Quentin episode focuses Eloi’s particular connection to the saints he seeks not only on his superior knowledge, but also on his physical similarity to the relics he uncovers. Eloi is not the first to seek Quentin’s body: the text recounts the failed *inventio* of Maurin, a Frankish courtier. Unlike Eloi, Maurin is cruelly punished for his presumption: worms spring from his hands and consume his flesh, and he dies in agony (73b). This punishment contrasts Maurin’s flesh with that of Quentin. Maurin’s living sacrilegious body is tormented by decomposition, while Eloi’s *inventio* reveals Quentin’s dead flesh as incorrupt and sweet-smelling (77a-b).<sup>205</sup> The differences between Maurin and Eloi’s excavations centre on Eloi’s preparation of his flesh. Quentin’s location is revealed to Eloi after the latter subjects his body to a night of prayer and vigil (76a). Eloi’s asceticism appropriately prepares his body to encounter Quentin’s relics, suggesting his access to other saints depends on the corporeal demonstration of a pre-existing holiness. If Eloi is particularly responsive to relics, they in turn respond to him and his saintly body, becoming enlisted into the performance and authentication of his sainthood.

Although Eloi enjoys privileged access to relics, *Elois* emphasises that the saint’s public *inventiones* make the relics available to the faithful.<sup>206</sup> Quentin’s excavation is a public spectacle: there are many witnesses, the martyr’s body produces a bright light that wakes sleeping locals and the elevation provokes a spate of miracles demonstrating Quentin’s saintly *virtus* (77a, 78a). *Elois* makes clear that for Quentin, and to an even greater extent for the company of saints ‘Que d’aus n’estoit nule memoire’, their capacity to participate in the world through

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<sup>204</sup> On the resonance of Eloi and other saints, see Hahn, *Strange Beauty*, p. 35.

<sup>205</sup> This sweet saintly smell is an almost omnipresent feature of relics in medieval hagiography, Nilson, pp. 28, 31.

<sup>206</sup> The mediating, public nature of Eloi’s relic interventions takes on a political aspect elsewhere in *Elois*. His restoration of Denis’s tomb emphasises the use of materials donated by the Merovingian king, foregrounding the intertwining of earthly networks with spiritual ones. Indeed, Fouracre has suggested that Eloi’s *inventiones* had a powerful political dimension, establishing memorial buildings throughout the landscape of his Noyon-Tournai bishopric, reminding his new subjects of his identity and existence, p. 87.

commemoration and miracle production relies on the connections Eloi's discoveries forge.<sup>207</sup> While in theory a relic's *virtus* is not diminished however it is remembered or displayed, these relics become accessible to the faithful only through their association with Eloi. Eloi's intervention transforms the relics he uncovers, restoring older saints' cults, amplifying their memories, sharing with them his present vitality.

The relics Eloi translates are not inert, but have an agency that is amplified through Eloi's collecting.<sup>208</sup> Before he re-enshrines Quentin's corpse, Eloi collects several items from the corpse for his personal possession: '[Eloi] ot à sa devise | Sa part du saintuaire prise' (77b). Quentin's body exemplifies medieval relics' characteristic disruption of simple categories of personhood and objecthood. These lines emphasise Eloi's ownership of Quentin's body (Eloi takes 'sa part' of the relics 'a sa devise'). While Quentin's body is fragmentable and possessible, it is neither passive nor inert and remains imbued with the saint's personality. Eloi extracts several of Quentin's teeth, the nails which tormented Quentin at his death, and strands of hair still growing from his head (77b). The fragmentation and dispersal of relics was widespread throughout the Middle Ages, contributing to a saint's greater influence and extended saintly presence.<sup>209</sup> Quentin's fragmentation recalls Bennett's assertion that the human body is itself a porous collection or network of diverse elements – elements that are, as in *Elois*, liable to be disassembled or added to, and which have their own agencies and trajectories.<sup>210</sup> As Eloi pulls out the teeth, blood flows from the corpse:

Tantost comme il les esracha,  
De la rachine issi sans doute  
De sanc vermel une grant goutte.  
(77b)

This blood flow – coupled with the body's still-growing hair – suggests these bodily fragments are components of a still living body. The life-like nature of Quentin's body collapses temporal distances between the two saints, intertwining them as

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<sup>207</sup> Of course, for Bennett, the participation of things in a human world of perception and access is not important or even necessary, see *Vibrant Matter*, p. xvi.

<sup>208</sup> All entities enlisted in a network are mediators, they all do something, Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, p. 128.

<sup>209</sup> Hahn, *Strange Beauty*, p. 136.

<sup>210</sup> Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, p. 112.



living bodies in a network spanning past and present.<sup>211</sup> Moreover, Quentin's incorruption gestures towards the Resurrection, extending the temporal reach of this network into a future that promises bodily restoration.<sup>212</sup> Eloi's collecting thus establishes a dense temporal network in which linear progression gives way to overlapping sacred moments.

The vibrant blood flow that anchors this epoch-spanning network presents Quentin's body as still-suffering, suspended eternally in the moment of his martyrdom.<sup>213</sup> *Elois* repeatedly emphasises Quentin's status as martyr ('le martir' (74a)). This appellation emphasises the difference between Quentin's and Eloi's routes to sainthood. Eloi confronts the question of how to become saintly when not living in a time of persecution:

D'estre martirs se combatoit,  
 [...]
 Mais puisque par effusion  
 De sanc ne pot avoir martire,  
 [...]
 Lui méisme martiria  
 (71a-b)

Like many confessor saints, Eloi turns to penance to mortify his body (21a), an *imitatio* that references an inaccessible model of early Christian torture and death.<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>211</sup> The life-like quality of Quentin's blood flow is brought out even further in *Quentin*, which describes the saint's blood as vividly red, 'Comme s'il fust en vie saine' (3061).

<sup>212</sup> Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, pp. 77, 81.

<sup>213</sup> Although *Elois* does not describe Quentin's martyrdom, the language used here resonates with the account of the saint's torture and death found in *Quentin*:

Et, quant li chiés colpés li fu  
 Li sans ki ert deseur le bu  
 Del chief contremont avalés  
 Estoit deseur les cors goutés  
 (*Quentin*, my emphasis, 1579-82)

Again, my argument is not that that the anonymous translator of *Elois* had read *Quentin*, nor its Latin source, but rather that thinking of these texts in terms of networked connections not necessarily tied to human intentionality encourages recognition of common themes and language that both generate and trace a sense of the interconnectedness of saints and texts.

<sup>214</sup> As Kreiner points out, even by the time the *Vita Eligii* was supposedly written, in the seventh century, the concept of a confessor saint was well-established and not in particular need of being defended, p. 58. Nevertheless, the notion of bodily mortification as a form of martyrdom remains common in hagiography throughout the Middle Ages, suggesting that this model of sanctity persists long after its attainment all but ceases to be a real possibility. On the variety of bodily strictures adopted in a displaced *imitatio* of unavailable martyrdom, see Sanok, p. 22.

Eloi may not experience the torments inflicted on the early martyrs, yet his proximity to Quentin at his *inventio* works to compensate for this perceived lack. Eloi's extraction of Quentin's tooth produces a blood flow that re-enacts Quentin's martyrdom, allowing Eloi to be present in this moment.

Eloi's collection of Quentin's relics thus allows Eloi to forge physical and temporal connections with martyrdom despite the fact he himself has not experienced it. At the same time, Eloi's fragmentation of Quentin's body positions Eloi as the perpetrator, rather than victim, of martyrdom. The text figures Eloi's relic extraction as a separation, recounting how the saint 'ensevra | Des reliques' (77b) and describing 'les reliques qu'il ot prises, | Et sevrées del saint martir' (78a). Eloi's identification with violence done to Quentin's body perhaps hints at a residual discomfort with bodily fragmentation; while, theologically speaking, relic fragmentation was unproblematic, in practice it could also provoke anxiety, as I discuss in Chapter Two.<sup>215</sup> Moreover, this episode emphasises the ways that Eloi's relic-collecting activities produce mediated forms of martyrdom that contribute to Eloi's sanctity. Eloi's own physical labour, as he puts his body to work in pursuit of Quentin's corpse, absorbs the qualities of Quentin's martyrdom. The passage describing Eloi's excavation emphasises the saint's physical exertions: he digs 'asprement', rolling up his sleeves and grasping his tools (76b). The description links his physical labour to devotional activity in a way that reflects medieval conceptions of the body as route to salvation.<sup>216</sup> The text describes how, as Eloi lifts his shovel to dig, he directs his heart to pray: 'De bras leva, de cuer oura' (76b), the repetitive structure of this line underscoring the parallels between the physical labour of Eloi's arms and his inner prayers. Eloi's bodily labours in search of Quentin take on a spiritual dimension that implicitly echoes how the more extreme bodily tortures of martyrdom generate saintliness. The process of Eloi's discovery becomes a form of *imitatio* through proximity, allowing the saint to share in his saintly predecessor's sanctity. Eloi's work to discover, collect, and enshrine the relics of martyrs emerges as a route towards sainthood equivalent to martyrdom itself.

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<sup>215</sup> Caroline Walker Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Zone Books, 1992), pp. 263-85; Guy Lobrichon, 'Le Culte des saints, le rire des hérétiques, le triomphe des savants', in *Les Reliques*, ed. by Bozóky and Helvétius, pp. 95-108 (p. 104).

<sup>216</sup> Samantha Riches and Bettina Bildhauer, 'Cultural Representations of the Body', in *A Cultural History of the Human*, ed. by Kalof, pp. 181-202 (p. 182).

The bodily identification between Eloi and Quentin is underlined more explicitly shortly after Eloi's death, in his body's own transition from living saint to desirable relic. Eloi's corpse mirrors the lively agency of his saintly predecessor. Eloi's corpse produces a miraculous blood flow that confounds the natural order of decomposition, as his several-days-old body has a nosebleed:

[...] une mout grant iauee  
 Del sanc qui du cors descendi;  
 Sour le barbe et sour la poitrine  
 Du saint Confes [...]  
 (122a)

The 'iauee | Del sanc' pouring from Eloi's body extends the association of blood with Quentin's martyrdom to an association with Eloi's nature as 'saint confes'. After a lifetime of holy works, Eloi's body resembles that of his martyred forebear. Despite their different paths to sainthood, the blood that springs from their bodies unites them in a common manifestation of sanctity.

Eloi's gathering and enshrinement of Quentin's relics is centred in the public sphere, as Eloi enables contact and knowledge between saint and believers, mediating and forging connections between Quentin and the faithful, as well as performing his own sainthood. However, Eloi's relic collection also has an unusually private, personal dimension.<sup>217</sup> The saint spends his nights secretly visiting churches in search of relics: 'Chercoit la nuit secrément | Tous les sains d'iluec entour' (45a). Eloi's concern for secrecy plays into tropes about saints' modest reluctance to allow stories of their miraculous deeds to circulate.<sup>218</sup> It also suggests a tension between the public and private facets of Eloi's relic veneration, a desire for intimacy with these sacred objects that excludes onlookers and establishes an exclusive relationship between saint and relic inaccessible to his fellow worshippers. Unlike Eloi's public discovery of Quentin's burial site, only the text makes Eloi's church visits accessible to the ordinary faithful (that is to his medieval readership), and the names, dates, and locations of the relics discovered remain in obscurity. These encounters do not

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<sup>217</sup> This privacy is relatively unusual, as medieval relic cults tend to emphasise their public nature, Barbara Abou-El-Haj, 'The Audiences for the Medieval Cult of Saints', *Gesta*, 30.1 (1991), 3-15 (p. 3). Nevertheless, throughout the Middle Ages there was a desire to collect and own relics personally, see Herrmann-Mascard, pp. 316-22.

<sup>218</sup> For example, the motif can be found in the nun of Barking's twelfth-century Anglo-Norman *Vie d'Edouard le Confesseur*, ll. 3037-48.

mediate between these saints and the faithful, but rather exclusively confirm Eloi's own sainthood.

What is important, then, is less the precise nature or identity of the relics Eloi interacts with than the details of the connections he establishes with them. These connections are clearly displayed in the text's description of Eloi's personal chambers, recounting how Eloi sleeps and prays under an array of reliquaries hanging over his bed:

En la cambre où li sains gisoit,  
 Tout droit de sor son lit en haut  
 Pendoient à .I. escaffaut  
 Et filatières et reliques.  
 De mout haus cor sains antiquites.  
 Li sains acoustumément  
 Soloit par nuit privéement,  
 Le chief cliner desor la haire,  
 Ourer desous chel saintuaire.  
 (22b)<sup>219</sup>

Eloi surrounds himself with a range of sacred objects for his solitary consumption in his private chambers. Eloi's private collection of sacred bodies and artefacts forms a physically concentrated network that nevertheless evokes a host of associations with distant bodies, spaces, and temporalities, mirroring many of the features of his public relic discoveries. This collapsing of large and small scales in Eloi's relic collection chimes with Latour's claim that networks are measured less in terms of scale than in terms of the extent of their connections: Eloi's collection is materially compact, but extensively connected.<sup>220</sup> Across saints' cults, relics are understood to incarnate connections that breach the frontiers of material space and time, fostering contact

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<sup>219</sup> In comparison to the Latin *Vita*, *Elois* consistently pays much closer attention to a sense of the connections the collection forges and to the materiality of the artefacts – bodily and nonbodily alike – that compose it. The *Vita Eligii* here reads: 'Habebat itaque in cubiculo, ubi assidue cubitare solitus erat, multorum pignora sanctorum in supremis dependentia, sub quorum sacro velamine reclinato in cilicio capite orare consueverat nocte' (l. 8, p. 675). Translated by McNamara as: 'Now, in the cubicle where he was accustomed to rest regularly he had tokens of many saints hanging from above and beneath that sacred covering he rested his head on a haircloth and spent the night in prayer' (*Life of St. Eligius*, p. 143). *Elois* not only adds specific descriptions of the structure of this collection (contained in phylacteries and reliquaries, and suspended from a scaffold over his bed), but underlines that these relics link Eloi to ancient saints of the past.

<sup>220</sup> Latour, 'On Actor-Network Theory', p. 371.

between the living and the dead, the saints in heaven and bodies on earth.<sup>221</sup> Here, the collection forges a temporal connection spanning Eloi's immediate experience and the past lives of the 'haus cor sains antiquites' he adores, drawing him into proximity with a sacred past.<sup>222</sup> The connections Eloi's collection establishes are not necessarily intelligible to the reader. Like Eloi's visits to saintly bodies in the churches of northern France, his private collection emphasises multiplicity and plenty over specificity: none of the 'cor sains' Eloi venerates are identified with an individual saint. Attention is focused not on the individual saints Eloi collects, but on the fact of his collection and, by extension, on his saintly connections.

In contrast to Eloi's mediation of unknown saints to the faithful through enshrinement, Eloi's private collection seems to take relics out of circulation, hoarding them in his room for solitary use. The special interface between Eloi and relics within the space of his collection can be productively illuminated by Bennett's observations about the relationships between bodies and objects in the modern phenomenon of extreme hoarding. Bennett suggests that hoarders have a special relationship to the material world, that they hear the 'call of things' more clearly than other people and that the hoard might respond to what is 'thing-ly' about the hoarder's own body.<sup>223</sup> Boundaries between the hoarder's body and the objects in the hoard break down, stressing the potential porosity and intercorporeality of all material bodies.<sup>224</sup> Within the hoard, the constituent elements, both human and nonhuman, 'intertwine, infuse, ally, undermine, and compete' with each other, sharing qualities without ever resolving into indifference.<sup>225</sup> Bennett's theorisation of the hoard shares a number of concerns with ANT, most notably its attention to the agency of the nonhuman and to the distribution of action and attributes over a collective in which all assembled entities are transformed.<sup>226</sup> Helpfully, however, she introduces an additional focus on the human body, its relationship to the material world, and its potential to incorporate the nonhuman, that resonates, I suggest, with Eloi's interactions with his collection.

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<sup>221</sup> Head, pp. 12, 114.

<sup>222</sup> This is an addition to the Latin.

<sup>223</sup> Bennett, 'Powers of the Hoard', pp. 247, 258-59. On the resonance of Eloi and other saints, see Hahn, *Strange Beauty*, p. 35.

<sup>224</sup> Bennett, 'Powers of the Hoard', p. 254.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 256.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 254.

Eloi's relic collection troubles distinctions between human bodies and other forms of sacred materiality. If the relics are an undistinguished mass, the reliquaries that contain them have diverse, nameable forms, and attention is paid to their display: in an addition not present in the Latin *Vita*, *Elois* details how both 'filatières' and 'saintuaire' hang from an 'escaffaut'.<sup>227</sup> 'Saintuaire' in particular is a capacious term that can refer to a reliquary, shrine, or sanctuary as well as to a relic: after his death Eloi's own body is referred to as a 'saintuaire' (123b).<sup>228</sup> These multiple meanings emphasise the relics' sacred function rather than the specific corporeality or materiality of the body, dissolving differences between the sacred object and its container in favour of intimacy and identification. This choice of vocabulary points to a conflation of relics and their reliquary containers that applies to medieval devotional practice more broadly: containers often seem to absorb the sacred qualities of their contents and may consequently be treated as sacred artefacts (a form of contact relic) in their own right.<sup>229</sup> The amorphous nature of Eloi's collection highlights the ways in which bodies, containers, and supports become, as in Bennett's hoards, intertwined in sacred conglomerations.

The ways in which Eloi himself might absorb the qualities and associations of the other bodies and artefacts within his relic collection is foregrounded by the collection's physical arrangement. The collection's set-up – several containers suspended from a scaffold – forges a range of spatial and bodily associations. It was common to display reliquaries hanging from a scaffold in churches over the main altar.<sup>230</sup> The description of the collection hanging directly over Eloi's sackcloth bed

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<sup>227</sup> It also suggests some of the ways in which reliquary containers might provide access to these otherwise undefined assemblages, as the description of reliquary containers hanging from a scaffold allows concrete visualisation of the material artefacts through which Eloi interfaced with his collection.

<sup>228</sup> The Anglo-Norman Dictionary gives as possible translations: 'sanctuary, holy place (in church, temple, etc.)'; 'sacred object, relic'; and 'shrine', *AND*.

<sup>229</sup> On the lack of difference in treatment between relics and reliquaries, see Alain Dierkens, 'Du bon (et du mauvais) usage des reliquaires au Moyen Age', in *Les Reliques*, ed. by Bozóky and Helvétius, pp. 239-52 (p. 240).

<sup>230</sup> Writing after c. 1188 Gervase of Canterbury describes how relics hung from a beam over the altar in Canterbury Cathedral before its destruction in a fire and restoration in the 1170s: 'Ad cornua altaris orientalia erant duae columpnae [...] quae trabem magnam sustentabant [...] Quae per transversum ecclesiae desuper altare trajecta [...] septem quoque scrinia auro et argento cooperta, et multorum sanctorum reliquiis referta sustentabat' (*Tractatus de combustion et reparation Cantuariensis ecclesiae*, in *The Historical Works of Gervase of Canterbury*, ed. by William Stubbs, 2 vols (London: Longman, 1879-80), I (1879), pp. 1-83 (p. 13)). 'At the eastern horns of the altar were two wooden columns [...] sustaining a great beam [...] This beam, carried across the church above the altar, and decorated with gold,

imports liturgical space into his private quarters, making his bed analogous to a church altar.<sup>231</sup> The identification of Eloi's private bed with the altar's location invites the reader to draw comparisons between Eloi's living body – that is the body that occupies his bed – and the sacred bodies associated with the altar. As the location of the celebration of the Eucharist, altars are closely associated with Christ's body. There is also an association with the relics of other saints, as relics were embedded inside all consecrated altars.<sup>232</sup> Eloi's body occupies a parallel space to these divine and saintly bodies, suggesting that, through his collection, he might take on the sacred characteristics of Christ or his saintly forebears in a form of bodily *imitatio*. Within the physically compact space of Eloi's relic collection, then, the saint absorbs the sacred potential of an extensive network of other sacred bodies, artefacts, temporalities, and spaces.

Eloi's collection draws particular attention to his body as a site of encounter with the sacred. Within the private space of his collection, Eloi's embodied gestures, as he lies in bed or bends to pray, forge networks of proximity with the other saintly bodies and artefacts assembled around him. Indeed, as in Bennett's hoards, *Elois* foregrounds the porosity of boundaries between the relics Eloi gathers and his own living body within the space of his collection.<sup>233</sup> As a young man, Eloi prays to God

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sustained [...] seven chests, covered with gold and silver, and filled with the relics of divers saints.' ('History of the Burning and Repair of the Church of Canterbury', in *The Architectural History of Canterbury Cathedral*, trans. by Robert Willis (London: Longman, 1845), pp. 32-62 (pp. 44-43)).

<sup>231</sup> In addition, the beds used by saints, particularly at the moment of their death, often bore sacred associations, occasionally functioning as relics in their own right. G. J. C. Snoek cites the examples of the beds of Saints Martin, Nicetius and Pope Gregory serving as relics, *Medieval Piety from Relics to the Eucharist: A Process of Mutual Interaction* (New York: Brill, 1995), p. 12. Jane Schulenberg notes several examples of bed relics of Merovingian female saints, including Gertrude, Austreberta, and Rusticula, 'Female Religious as Collectors of Relics: Finding Sacrality and Power in the "Ordinary"', in *Where Heaven and Earth Meet: Essays on Medieval Europe in Honor of Daniel F. Callahan*, ed. by Michael Frassetto (Leiden: Brill, 2014), pp. 152-77 (pp. 165-66).

<sup>232</sup> Robert Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?: Saints and Worshippers from the Martyrs to the Reformation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), pp. 444-45; Jean Michaud, 'Culte des reliques et épigraphie: l'exemple des dédicaces et des consécration d'autels', in *Les Reliques*, ed. by Bozóky and Helvétius, pp. 199-212 (p. 199). On the links created between the body of Christ and the bodies of the saints through their association in and on the altar, see Jean-Claude Schmitt, 'Les Reliques et les images', in *Les Reliques*, ed. by Bozóky and Helvétius, pp. 145-59 (p. 149). As Herrmann-Mascard points out, it was conventional for altars to contain multiple relic fragments which were not necessarily overtly identified to the faithful, suggesting a further potential resemblance between Eloi's relic collection and the space of the altar, p. 117.

<sup>233</sup> Bennett, 'Powers of the Hoard', p. 254.

to send him a sign ('aucune monstranche') to indicate he is living an appropriately pious life (22b), a sign that is delivered through his collection. While praying beneath his collection, Eloi falls asleep and an angelic vision announces that the 'monstranche' has been granted. The suspended reliquaries began to drip a sweet-smelling balm that falls on Eloi and confounds his senses:

De douche oudour senti .I. flair,  
 Qui toute emploie et lui et l'air,  
 Et sour son chief senti, pour voir,  
 Soues gouttes souef plouvoir,  
 Qui del escaffaut descendoient,  
 Où li saintuaire pendoient.  
 Tous esbahis se leva sus,  
 Il regarda et sus et jus,  
 Et esgardant et escoutant,  
 Ala tant qu'il vit degoutant,  
 Si comme basme de Crimaire,  
 Et del drap qui le saintuaire  
 Couvroit par droite acoustumance,  
 Si s'espandoit la grans flagranche  
 (23a)

The collected relics and containers are lively agents that communicate meaningful information, confirming Eloi's holiness and participating in the construction and transmission of his sainthood. The emphasis on the participation of the material apparatus surrounding the holy bodies in the standard tropes of relic behaviour (the scaffold which rains balm, the cloth covering that 'espandoit la grans flagranche') again points to *Elois's* greater interest in the sacred materiality of the collection's components than its Latin source, suggesting the porous boundary between relic and container.<sup>234</sup> Moreover, the scaffold in this passage recalls the tortures of martyrdom

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<sup>234</sup> This emphasis on the reliquary accoutrements is again absent from the Latin: 'odorem hausit gratissimum, sensit etiam ex gerulo reliquiarum guttas suavissimas supra suum lenissimae defluere caput. Ex quo nimis attonitas surrexit velociter, et sollicite conspiciens, vidit quasi balsamum distillare de crismario et pallio quo erat opertus. Tanta quippe flagrantia odoris suavissimi totum illud repleverat cubiculum' (*Vita Eligii*, I. 8, p. 675). Translated by McNamara as: 'he sensed a sweet odor, and the softest drops from the chrism of the reliquaries flowed smoothly upon his head. Exceedingly astonished by this, he swiftly arose and careful investigation disclosed chrism like balsam distilled on the blanket that



and the ‘goutes’ of holy liquid anticipate the drops of blood that burst from Quentin’s corpse. The text’s choice of vocabulary thus once again identifies Eloi’s collecting activity with martyrdom, while underscoring the connection between this relic collection and Eloi’s own sanctity.

Above all, this dense passage makes Eloi’s encounter with the items assembled in his collection a matter of bodily, sensory engagement. Eloi’s response to the miracle enlists four of the five senses. Eloi smells a waft of sweet scent (‘douche oudour’) as he feels (‘senti[r]’) drops of holy balm fall on him. Shaken, he looks around, watching and listening (‘esgard[er] et escout[er]’) until he sees (‘v[er]’) the fragrance’s source. In his archaeological reading of network theories, Carl Knappett figures the senses as a form of network, one which connects the body with what is within its reach.<sup>235</sup> Medieval theories of the senses push this sensory interconnection even further. Theorisations of physical touch and intromissive vision emphasise the body’s porosity by affirming that what is perceived by the senses has a physical effect on the body, mingling the viewer with what is seen.<sup>236</sup> Even without the direct touch of body to relic, this encounter initiates an intimate contact between Eloi and sacred matter. Eloi’s porous, sensory body is interwoven and imbued with the sights, smells, and sounds of the sacred: his body becomes a vessel in which to receive the divine (‘emploi’).<sup>237</sup> Relic and reliquary are bound together with Eloi’s body in an intimate sensory, intercorporeal network.<sup>238</sup> Once again, through his interactions with relics, the proximity and resemblance of Eloi’s body to the sacred is emphasised. Through his body’s interaction with those in his collection, Eloi becomes integrated into his sacred collection, sharing in its holiness and confirming his path to sainthood.

Relic collecting is thus woven into the core of Eloi’s personal devotional activity, an expression of Eloi’s sainthood that in turn further enhances Eloi’s

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covered him. And such a sweet fragrance spread from there that it filled the room’ (*Life of St. Eligius*, p. 143).

<sup>235</sup> Knappett, p. 63.

<sup>236</sup> See Suzannah Biernoff, *Sight and Embodiment in the Middle Ages* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp. 71-75, 100; Emma Campbell and Robert Mills, ‘Introduction: Troubled Vision’, in *Troubled Vision: Gender, Sexuality, and Sight in Medieval Text and Image*, ed. by Emma Campbell and Robert Mills (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 1-14 (p. 4).

<sup>237</sup> Again, this is not found in the *Vita Eligii*, where the fragrance only fills the room, not Eloi: *Elois* heightens the intercorporeality of collection and saint, see above n. 234.

<sup>238</sup> Indeed, so profound is the effect of the balm’s fragrance that Eloi is overwhelmed, and can only remain in his cell for one hour before fleeing (23a).

sanctity. His *inventiones* create mutually beneficial networks of association in which the memory and cults of other saints are shored up, while Eloi's body comes to resemble the martyrs he seeks to emulate. *Elois* presents Eloi's sainthood as a sainthood of associations, established and communicated through networks that bring his body into relationships with other saints' bodies and nonhuman objects. In particular, Eloi's private relic collection highlights the ways the connections his collecting traces break down boundaries between its constituent elements, human, nonhuman, and sacred alike. Thinking about the collection in the light of Bennett's theorisation of the hoard suggests the ways in which Eloi's collection draws the saint into intimate intercorporeal exchanges with the sacred artefacts he gathers. Through his physical proximity and sensory exchanges with his hoard, Eloi absorbs the sacred qualities of the relics he collects, enhancing his sanctity.

### **Bodies, things, books**

Eloi's connections to the saints and objects he collects are further cemented by his role as creator of shrines and reliquaries. Throughout, the text describes Eloi as a 'saint orfevre', thus presenting his work as a goldsmith as a fundamental aspect of his sainthood. The interweaving of Eloi's craft with his sanctity, I argue in this section, not only develops the connection between Eloi's sainthood and other saintly bodies and nonhuman entities, but also foregrounds how his saintly presence might in turn be distributed across a network of nonhuman things. It is notable that almost all of Eloi's surviving thirteenth-century depictions represent him as an artisan. The stained glass windows of Angers (c. 1225-35) and Auxerre Cathedrals (1240-58) show Eloi respectively wielding a hammer (Figure 2), and working at his anvil and forge (Figure 3).<sup>239</sup> Jean-Cristophe Masmonteil catalogues three thirteenth-century manuscript illustrations of Eloi from vernacular prose legends; all show Eloi at his forge (Figure 4) or workbench (Figure 5).<sup>240</sup> From the twelfth century onwards,

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<sup>239</sup> Masmonteil, pp. 17, 20, 51-52. Of the surviving thirteenth-century stained glass representations of the saint, only at Le Mans Cathedral is he depicted exclusively as a bishop, rather than an artisan.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47.

pilgrim badges depicting Eloi at his anvil were distributed in Noyon (Figure 6).<sup>241</sup> The later Middle Ages placed an even greater emphasis on Eloi's relationship to craft and its rich materials: he was the patron saint of smiths, and honoured by several fourteenth-century French artisanal confraternities.<sup>242</sup> Moreover, from the fourteenth century Eloi was increasingly depicted as a merchant-smith, selling rather than forging his golden creations, foregrounding his association with luxury craft's commercial aspects.<sup>243</sup> This later association with goldsmithing's commercial value hints at potential tensions in the relationship between luxury materials, craft, and Eloi's saintliness. *Elois*, I argue, consistently makes the case for the spirituality of Eloi's crafting, although this may be troubled by competing systems of value both within and beyond the text.



Figure 2. Eloi crafting, c. 1225-35, stained glass, north choir, w. 107, Angers Cathedral, Angers.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 129; Brian Spencer, *Pilgrim Souvenirs and Secular Badges* (London: Stationery Office, 1998), p. 221.

<sup>242</sup> Masmonteil, p. 65.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

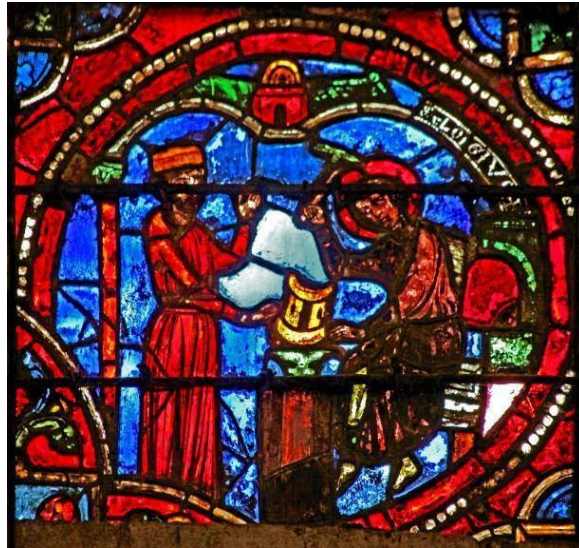


Figure 3. Eloi at his anvil hammering a throne, 1240-58, stained glass, w. 18, Auxerre Cathedral, Auxerre.



Figure 4. Scene from a breviary showing Eloi at his forge, thirteenth century, gold leaf and ink on parchment, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS latin 1023, fol. 267<sup>r</sup>.



Figure 5. Scene from an Old French legendary translated from Jacques de Voragine depicting Eloi at his workbench, thirteenth century, ink on parchment, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 185, fol. 182<sup>r</sup>.



Figure 6. Pilgrim badge depicting Eloi hammering on an anvil (left) opposite a pilgrim offering a coil of candle wax to the saint (right), c. 1260-1300, lead alloy, 46 × 39 mm, Museum of London, London (87.14/2).

Gold, the raw material for Eloi's constructions, was considered an appropriate substance for the fabrication of reliquaries because of its material and symbolic qualities. Gold's incorruptibility, durability, and ability to evoke the heavenly Jerusalem made it an obvious choice for such containers.<sup>244</sup> Yet it was also associated with worldly sin and greed.<sup>245</sup> Within *Elois*, gold is at times tied up with displays of earthly wealth and political power. In one of Eloi's emblematic miracles, King Clothar commissions the young saint to create a golden throne, providing him the necessary quantity 'de gemmes et d'or' (18a).<sup>246</sup> Eloi astounds the court by creating two identical thrones, each weighing the same as the original quantity of materials he was given (18b). In this miracle, Eloi's skill with luxury materials participates in displays of secular ostentation, but it is also oriented towards the spiritual: as discussed above, the miraculous expansion of matter recalls biblical models of holiness.<sup>247</sup> Eloi participates in the worldly circulation of monetary wealth, and yet this wealth is used to emphasise his saintly nature and the material world's potential to communicate this sanctity.<sup>248</sup>

The spiritual potential of the gold Eloi crafts (foregrounded by the throne miracle) draws attention to how Eloi's role as goldsmith lends particular potency to common medieval metaphors of saintly bodies as gold, gems, and treasure.<sup>249</sup> Drawing on biblical models, these metaphors were common in Latin and vernacular

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<sup>244</sup> Revelations 21. 18: 'et erat structura muri eius ex lapide iaspide ipsa vero civitas auro mundo simile vitro mundo' ('And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass'). All Bible references in Latin and English are respectively to: *Biblia sacra: iuxta vulgatam versionem*, ed. by Robert Weber, 4th edn (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994); and *The Bible: Authorized King James Version*, ed. by Robert Carroll and Stephen Prickett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

<sup>245</sup> See for example, E. Jane Burns, *Courtly Love Undressed: Reading Through Clothes in Medieval French Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), p. 39; Camille, *The Gothic Idol*, p. 261.

<sup>246</sup> Several folios are missing from the beginning of *Elois*'s unique manuscript, and as such the extant text opens *in media res* with this chapter.

<sup>247</sup> See above, p. 63.

<sup>248</sup> This is further complicated by Eloi's historical role as royal chancellor – Merovingian gold coins survive stamped with his name, showcasing his submersion in gold's monetary values, Masmonteil, pp. 26-27

<sup>249</sup> As Hahn points out in her discussion of Eloi's Latin *Vita*, *Strange Beauty*, pp. 33, 37. The first recording of this metaphor of relics as gems and gold dates to the second-century Greek *Martyrdom of St Polycarp*, which describes relics as 'dearer [...] than precious stones and finer than gold', ed. by Musurillo, pp. 16-17.

hagiography.<sup>250</sup> Indeed, I return to this commonplace motif throughout my thesis, considering how it is integrated into specific networks of texts, artefacts, and saints. Eloi's role as craftsman brings the materiality of these metaphors sharply into focus. After death Eloi is described as 'la gemme, l'esmeraude' (124b) in a phrasing that transforms him into the precious stones he crafted during his lifetime.<sup>251</sup> Eloi's spiritual perfection is described in terms of refining precious metals: 'Et il ot bien s'ame espurée, | Et sa consciënce burnie' (112a).<sup>252</sup> Eloi is purified and burnished on his path to spiritual completion, calling attention to similarities between the material refinement of the gold he crafts and the spiritual refinement he himself seeks. Saint and metal resemble each other, being connected through the labour required to shape them into appropriate vessels for the sacred.<sup>253</sup>

The associations Eloi's goldsmithing forges between saintly and nonhuman forms of materiality are particularly notable in descriptions of the shrines Eloi crafts. The shrines and containers Eloi constructs for other saints' relics occupy a central position in that saint's cult. Visitors to Lucian de Beauvais's tomb, for example, are prompted to speak in admiration not of that saint, but of the quality of the 'riche monument' and 'bel tegument' that Eloi had built: 'chil disent qui l'euvre virent, | K'ainc de milleur parler n'oïrent' (79a). Even as Eloi's handiwork mediates between Lucian and faithful, it commemorates Eloi's own skill: Lucian's relic cult glorifies Eloi's memory. The connections forged through Eloi's craft transform other saints, their bodies, containing artefacts, and sacred spaces, into expressions of Eloi's skill,

<sup>250</sup> In particular, this metaphor draws on descriptions of the bridegroom's body from Canticles 5. 11-15: 'Caput ejus aurum optimum [...] Manus illius tornatiles, aureae, plenae hyacinthis. Venter ejus eburneus, distinctus sapphiris. Crura illius columnae marmoreae quae fundatae sunt super bases aureas.' ('His head is as the most fine gold [...] His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl: his belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires. His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold'). For further discussion, see Chapter Two, p. 149; Chapter Four, pp. 263-76.

<sup>251</sup> The choice of emerald here again perhaps a reference to the Heavenly Jerusalem as it is described in Revelations 21. 19: 'fundamenta muri civitatis omni lapide pretioso ornata fundamentum primum iaspis secundus sapphyrus tertius carcedonius quartus zmaragdus' ('And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald'). On the exegetical tradition of the specific gems of Revelations, see William W. Reader, 'The Twelve Jewels of Revelation 21:19-20: Tradition, History, and Modern Interpretations', *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 100 (1981), 433-57.

<sup>252</sup> This is another metaphor with an extensive history, also ultimately with biblical roots, see Isaiah 48. 10; Dominic Janes, *God and Gold in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 75, 90.

<sup>253</sup> This chimes with Bennett's observation that the materiality of the human body is never entirely or exclusively human, *Vibrant Matter*, p. 112.



sanctity, and presence. Eloi as saint and artisan is commemorated and made enduringly present in an extended network incorporating intermingled human and nonhuman elements. Like his *inventio* of Quentin, Eloi's reliquary crafting is described in a way that implicates his own body in his work:

Les sepucres de mout cors sains  
 Fist li sains de ses saintes mains,  
 D'or et d'argent, de gemmes riches  
 (57b)

Eloi's creations are produced at the interface of his 'saintes mains' with the gold, silver, and gems that encase the relics he enshrines. Theologically speaking, reliquaries and tombs become imbued with sanctity through contact with the saintly bodies they enclose, although this understanding is routinely complicated in the Middle Ages by factors such as the metaphorical associations of reliquary materials with saintly bodies explored above.<sup>254</sup> Here, Eloi's crafted shrines communicate a double saintly contact: the touch of the bodies they contain, but also the touch of the saintly hands that create them. The golden, jewel-encrusted tombs Eloi creates trace dense saintly, bodily, and material associations, allowing access to the interwoven presences of relic, container, and Eloi's living, working body.

*Elois* explores at length the possible connections between Eloi's living body, other saints' relics, and reliquary materials. Eloi's body is already sacred, resembling and acting as a relic before his death: the touch of his living flesh repeatedly heals the sick (44a-b, 51a-b). Eloi's relic-like potential is also explored through his changing interactions with luxury materials.<sup>255</sup> This relationship hints at potentially undesirable, sinful aspects of Eloi's fascination with luxury materials, even as it serves to bolster his sanctity. Before his consecration as bishop, Eloi wore richly embellished clothing:

Li sains en son commencement,  
*D'or et de gemmes noblement*  
 Apareilloit ses vestéures:  
 Adiès chaignoit riches chaintures,

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<sup>254</sup> Hahn, 'The Voices of the Saints' (p. 28); Cynthia Hahn, 'What Do Reliquaries Do for Relics?', *Numen*, 57 (2010), 284-316 (pp. 291, 307); Malo, p. 8; Amy G. Remensnyder, 'Legendary Treasure at Conques: Reliquaries and Imaginative Memory', *Speculum*, 71 (1996), 884-906 (p. 889).

<sup>255</sup> A point also made by Hahn, *Strange Beauty*, pp. 33, 37.



Ablouque d'or menu ferrées  
*De membres d'or et bien gemmées,*  
 Avec tout che, les aumosnieres  
*Avoit tant riches et tant chieres*  
*D'or et de gemmes bien ouvrées,*  
 De boutons d'or enfrangelées;  
 Ses dois avoit tous plains d'aniaux,  
 Et à son col riches fremaus,  
 [...]

Ses vestéures precieuses,  
 [...]

De dras couviers de *grant tesor*,  
*Si comme de gemmes et d'or*  
 (31b-32a, my emphasis)

*Elois* significantly elaborates on the *Vita*'s descriptions of these garments, paying greater attention to their material details.<sup>256</sup> Moreover, writing about luxury clothing in the vernacular imbues these descriptions with new connotations, eliciting comparisons with lengthy descriptions of dress in romance.<sup>257</sup> Despite their ostentation, these dazzling garments do not hinder Eloi's path to sanctity. The passage returns repeatedly to the formula 'D'or et de gemmes', linguistically linking the materials that fashion Eloi's courtly ornaments with those that craft the saintly shrines he creates. In further linguistic echoes between Eloi's garments and his artisanal practice, the shrine he works ('ouvra') for Denis is richly ('richement')

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<sup>256</sup> The *Vita Eligii*'s account of Eloi's clothes reads: 'Utebatur quidem in primordio aurum et gemmas in habitu; habebat quoque zonas ex auro et gemmis compositas necnon et bursas eleganter gemmates; lineas vero metallo rutilas orasque sarcarum auro opertas, cuncta quidem vestimenta praetiosissima, nonnulla etiam olosirica. [...] [R]adientia auri et gemmarum mole opertum' (I. 12, pp. 678-79). Translated by McNamara as 'At first, he was used to wear gold and gems on his clothes having belts composed of gold and gems and elegantly jeweled purses, linens covered with red metal and golden sacs hemmed with gold and all of the most precious fabrics including all of silk [...] gleaming with the weight of the gold and gems that covered him' (*Life of St. Eligius*, p. 145).

<sup>257</sup> Burns writes of the ways in which descriptions of luxury courtly clothes elicit associations both with positive aspects such as elite status and largesse, and more negative connotations of greed and ambition, which are often specifically gendered, and targeted at women in particular, *Courtly Love Undressed*, pp. 26, 39. There is a striking contrast between *Elois*'s positive spin on its titular saint's lavish dress and, for example, the punishment endured by Saint Audrey for delighting in wearing rich necklaces in the *Vie de seinte Audree*, discussed in Chapter Two, pp. 143-46.

constructed, covered in gold and costly gems ('Couvri d'or et de gemmes chieres' (58a)). Likewise, Martin's tomb is covered in gems and gold ('Couvri de gemmes et de l'or') that Eloi works nobly ('ouvra si noblement' (57b-58a)). The rich, nobly worked gold and gems that cover Eloi's living, courtly body are assimilated with those that cover saintly relics.

The description of Eloi's clothes as covered in 'grant tresor' (32a) represents a particularly dense nexus of secular and sacred associations. The Old French 'tresor', like its Latin root *thesaurus*, can refer both to the repository in which treasure is stored (the treasury or treasure-house) and to its precious contents, already implying a sense of collection and containment that blurs boundaries between container and contained.<sup>258</sup> *Elois* frequently uses 'tresor' in reference to the royal treasury, evoking associations with secular wealth and political power (18a). Yet the relics that Eloi discovers are also precious 'tresor', a treasure more valuable than silver and gold ('Mout miex vallant d'argent et d'or' (72b)), another typical metaphor asserting the value of spiritual treasure over material wealth even as it conflates the two. The precious materials Eloi uses to enshrine these relics are frequently donated by the king from his 'tresor' (58a), intermingling the term's sacred and secular meanings with the enclosed body and the enclosing shrine. The encasement of Eloi's living body in golden, bejewelled clothing echoes his enshrinement of relics in glorious containers, suggesting that his adornment in life anticipates his fate later on, as a relic and object of devotion in his turn.

Eloi's living resemblance to relics is fostered not only through his wearing of luxurious clothing, but also his dispersal of these garments. Like the shrines he constructs, Eloi's saintly presence can appear as a network of interwoven human and nonhuman, organic and inorganic matter.<sup>259</sup> Eloi's glittering clothes are incorporated into a demonstration of his sanctity, reflecting on how traces of his presence might extend past the borders of his fleshy body. Eloi repeatedly gives away his rich clothes, revelling in poverty (32a-b), in a rejection of secular wealth for the promise of spiritual reward echoed across saintly literature.<sup>260</sup> Eloi's golden clothing acquires sacred meaning, communicating his saintly nature through its dispersal.<sup>261</sup> *Elois*

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<sup>258</sup> Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 41.

<sup>259</sup> Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, p. 112.

<sup>260</sup> See Campbell, *Medieval Saints' Lives*, p. 51.

<sup>261</sup> See Latour, 'On Technical Mediation' on the dispersal of elements in a network, p. 36.

figures Eloi's donation of his wealth as a translation ('translatoit' (26a)), the saint translating his wealth into alms, and by extension, transforming himself from courtier to saint.<sup>262</sup> The dispersal of Eloi's courtly clothing, as well as his donations as translation, recalls the *translatio* and fragmentation he imposes on Quentin's corpse, heightening the depiction of the saint as a living relic.<sup>263</sup> Eloi's presence is fragmented and dispersed in his lifetime, distributed across the mobile, extendible network of his garments.

If its depiction of Eloi's shrines and clothes demonstrates how nonhuman elements are implicated in sacred networks, *Elois* also considers how these networks might incorporate textual elements that provide access to Eloi's body and to the sacred more generally.<sup>264</sup> Throughout *Elois*, texts are related to other material objects. When Eloi founds a monastery at Solignac, he donates all the belongings ('tous biens') necessary for the monks:

Tous les vaissaus qui necessaire  
 Pueent estre à usage humain,  
 De fust et de queure et d'arain  
 Dras en lit, napes, vestéures,  
 Et des devines escritures  
 (38a)

This catalogue of objects necessary for monastic life mingles the mundane things of everyday human usage with liturgical ornaments and divine writings. Scriptural texts ('devines escritures') are fundamental components in the everyday stuff of monastic life.<sup>265</sup> This passage presents sacred texts as a type of object on a par with a wooden cup or an altar cloth. This catalogue's inventory-like nature recalls how books are often presented in medieval documents as valuable objects listed alongside other treasures owned by an institution, as well as being recorded in relic-lists.<sup>266</sup> Books

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<sup>262</sup> See Latour's comments on translation and transformation, *Reassembling the Social*, p. 108.

<sup>263</sup> See also Burns on how fragments of clothing function as a displaced fragmentation of the female courtly body, *Courtly Love Undressed*, p. 10.

<sup>264</sup> See Wogan-Browne, 'The Apple's Message', p. 43, on the ways in which the hagiographic text can function as a contact relic.

<sup>265</sup> Mary A. Rouse, and Richard H. Rouse, 'Eloi's Books and Their Bookcase', *Manuscripta*, 55.2 (2011), 170-92 (p. 188).

<sup>266</sup> Teresa Webber gives two twelfth-century insular examples: the *Textus Roffensis* compiled at Rochester Cathedral Priory, in which a booklist is included in the records of the priory's 'endowments, privileges and property'; and the Reading Abbey cartulary, where a

were frequently housed in rooms or alcoves also used for storing sacred objects such as the Eucharist and reliquaries.<sup>267</sup> The way books were treated, both physically and in medieval catalogues and lists, suggests they were thought of as treasures similar to other material and spiritually valuable items. The seventeenth-century marginal note describing MS Douce 94's loss and repurchase, which specifies the price for which the book was bought back ('LX escus de LXIV sols'), emphasises the ways in which devotional texts like *Elois* weave, through their circulation, networks with material, social, and commercial, as well as spiritual associations.<sup>268</sup>

Eloi's treatment of his own book collection draws particularly significant attention to the material and sacred connections books can forge. He stores this collection in his private chamber, arranged alongside the relics he gathers in hanging reliquaries:

Pendoient en son dormitoire,  
De mil cors sains li saintuaire;  
Laiens erent li grant livraire  
Estendu sour une establie  
(32b-33a)

As the couplet 'saintuaire'-'livraire' indicates, there is a resonance here between the collected books and the collected relics they sit alongside, suggesting Eloi's contact with texts is entangled with his interactions with sacred objects. Eloi's books are incorporated into the network of his relic collection. The idea that books could be relic-like sacred objects was a familiar one to medieval readers. Several saints counted books among their contact relics.<sup>269</sup> Relic fragments were also inserted into

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list of the abbey's books accompanies a list of its relics. 'Monastic and Cathedral Book Collections in the Late Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries', in *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland*, ed. by Elisabeth Leedham-Green and Teresa Webber (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 109-25 (p. 110). See also Luxford, p. 60.

<sup>267</sup> Emma Campbell, 'The Library in Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century French Literature: Benoît de Sainte-Maure's *Roman de Troie*, Chrétien de Troyes's *Cligès*, and Adenet le Roi's *Berte as grans piés*', *French Studies*, 70.2 (2016), 187-200 (p. 189); Francis Wormald, 'Some Illustrated Manuscripts of the Lives of the Saints', *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, 35 (1952), 248-66 (p. 262).

<sup>268</sup> MS Douce 94, fol. 171<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>269</sup> For example, Gábor Klaniczay and Ildikó Kristóf identify book-relics of Saints Cuthbert, Benedict, Boniface, 'Écritures saintes et pactes diaboliques: les usages religieux de l'écrit (Moyen Age et Temps modernes)', *Annales: Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 56 (2001), 947-80 (p. 957); and Herrmann-Mascard identifies book-relics belonging to Saints Maixant and Pope Gregory, p. 43.

elaborate liturgical book bindings in ways that blur the categories of book and reliquary in a more material sense.<sup>270</sup>

The intermingling of treasure, relic, reliquary, and book on display in Eloi's private collection is heightened further in descriptions of his artisanal labours. Eloi's goldsmithing is accompanied by his study of devotional texts:

Et ses mains al orfaverie,  
 Devant lui sour une establie,  
 Avoit adès ouvert le livre  
 [...]
 Ensi ouvroit de .II. ouvrages;  
 Des mains faisoit humains usages,  
 Et toute sa pensée avoit  
 A l'escritures qu'il véoit.  
 (25a)

The double labour of his hands and thoughts direct Eloi to divine contemplation: reading and crafting are similar forms of 'ouvrage' leading the saint closer to God.<sup>271</sup> Both these forms of work emphasise how interaction with material objects (gold and books respectively) allow Eloi access to the sacred. In these arrangements, reading becomes a powerful means of producing contact with the divine. *Elois* draws on the language of monastic *lectio divina* and ancient memory techniques to describe Eloi's contemplative reading processes. These processes are expressed in both bodily and material terms: Eloi sucks the 'douch miel' from 'diverses fleurs' that he found in 'diviers liex' (33a), figuring his reading as both a bodily consumption and a collection of diverse material.<sup>272</sup> Eloi secretes his collected knowledge '[e]n l'aumaire de sa pensée' (33a). This imagery draws on established medieval conceptions of memory as a store room: as Mary Carruthers explains, terms used to describe memory include *thesaurus*, *cella*, and *arca*, expressing memory as a spatial

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<sup>270</sup> Surviving examples of such reliquary bindings are rare. See for example a Gospel book produced at Regensburg in the eleventh or twelfth century now housed in the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, whose binding includes a rock crystal over an image of the crucifixion into which a fragment of wood (representing the True Cross) has been inserted. See catalogue entry no. 61 in *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics, and Devotion in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Martina Bagnoli, and others (London: British Museum Press, 2011), pp. 121-22.

<sup>271</sup> Rouse and Rouse, p. 188.

<sup>272</sup> Perhaps recalling the Latin root 'legere', which, as Carruthers explores, implies a process of collection, *The Book of Memory*, p. 34.

enclosure into which information is placed.<sup>273</sup> Here ‘aumaire’ is particularly invested in the intermingling of sacred objects, bodies, and books: it can refer to a range of storage spaces such as a ‘cupboard, storeroom, case, chest, bookcase, wall recess, or book room’, receptacles which collect books alongside other precious material and sacred objects.<sup>274</sup> *Elois* highlights the potential of the ‘aumaire’ to incorporate the sacred: after Eloi’s corpse miraculously expels blood, the faithful soak this blood up with cloths which they ‘encloient en une aumaire’ to serve as a ‘saintuaire’ (122a).<sup>275</sup> The bodily nature of Eloi’s reading suggests that the saint’s body can be understood not only as a relic in its own right, but also as a container for books and other sacred objects. Elsewhere, *Elois*’s description of the saint’s imitation of biblical models of piety operates another slippage between container and contained in which Eloi comes to resemble a book itself. Eloi inscribes the apostles’ holy words in his heart: ‘En son cuer avoit bien escrite | Chele sentence’ (28b), his person transformed into a surface to be written on.<sup>276</sup> In the metaphors that describe Eloi’s pious reading, his body becomes a repository for the sacred that resembles the already interconnected models of the book, bookcase, and reliquary.<sup>277</sup>

The links drawn between rich materials, saintly bodies, sacred texts, and books within *Elois* potentially inflect the ways the text’s medieval readers experienced both the saint and the book that recounts his life. *Elois*’s sole surviving manuscript is richly decorated: filigree designs in red, blue, and gold leaf buttress the text, while the illuminated initials that open each chapter house foliate, animal, or

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<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>274</sup> Campbell, ‘The Library in Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century French Literature’, pp. 188-89.

<sup>275</sup> This mention of the reliquary container into which Eloi’s bloody cloth is inserted is not in *Elois*’s Latin source, which reads: ‘cum diligentia, quousque sponte decurrit, sanguinem collegerunt ac pro magno munere servandum deinceps in pignoribus segragarunt’ (*Vita Eligii*, II. 37, p. 721). ‘Diligently, they collected the blood wherever it ran and the better to conserve the gift separated it into three pieces’ (*Life of St. Eligius*, trans. by McNamara, p. 163). *Elois*’s greater interest in the containers that enclose saintly relics than the earlier *Vita* is perhaps influenced by the Fourth Lateran Council’s 1215 decree that no relics should be openly displayed, see above, p. 20.

<sup>276</sup> This recalls God’s biblical injunction to the faithful write his commandments in their hearts: Proverbs 7. 3, ‘scribe illam in tabulis cordis tui’ (‘write them upon the table of thine heart’). On the heart as a medieval synonym for memory, see Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, p. 53.

<sup>277</sup> The intimate associations of body, book, and enclosure communicated by the ‘aumaire’ are not found in *Elois*’s Latin source, which deploys a strikingly different image: Eloi stores the flowers he collects ‘in alvearium sui pectoris’ (‘in the beehive of his breast’) (*Vita Eligii*, I. 12, p. 679).

human inhabitants (see Figures 7-12). Like the saint or the reliquary, the manuscript can be understood as a composite entity that assembles multiple elements with their own materialities, agencies, and associations. The codex incorporates the human agencies of authors, scribes, illuminators, and readers; the agencies of the text itself; the plant, mineral, and animal agencies of its inks, parchment, and bindings.<sup>278</sup> These features, which are shared by most medieval books, are by no means unique to *Elois's* manuscript. Nevertheless, here, as elsewhere in my thesis, it is important to consider how the individual manuscript as an ad hoc grouping of entities and agencies of different kinds can imbue commonplace manuscript features with sacred significance, thereby transforming the reader's experience of the text transmitted.<sup>279</sup> For example, the use of gold leaf to decorate the manuscript containing *Elois* – a use that overlays the (animal) skin of the parchment with gold – might recall the attention Eloi pays to the adornment of his own and other saints' bodies in gold and jewels. Indeed, this association is heightened by the way Eloi's body is understood within the text as a surface on which to be written.<sup>280</sup> In its material form, then, the manuscript plays with many of the metaphors employed in *Elois* to describe Eloi's body, as well as those of other saints. These metaphors encourage associations between these bodies and other forms of materiality: precious gold and gems, spaces to keep books, the surface of the book itself, entities that contain or are contained, entities rich in earthly and spiritual value. The composite manuscript might provoke careful readers to draw parallels between the surface of the page and the text's sacred

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<sup>278</sup> Sarah Kay draws attention to the manuscript as a combination of human, animal, and plant elements, 'Legible Skins: Animals and the Ethics of Medieval Reading', *Postmedieval*, 2.1 (2011), 13-32 (p. 13). For analysis of the materialities and trajectories of the minerals, plants, and animal matter used to produce medieval inks, see Paola Ricciardi and Kristine Rose Beers, 'The Illuminators' Palette', in *Colour: The Art and Science of Illuminated Manuscripts*, ed. by Stella Panayotova, with Dierdre Jackson and Paola Ricciardi (London: Harvey Miller, 2016), pp. 26-57 (pp. 27-38).

<sup>279</sup> In particular, I argue, considering the manuscript through ANT emphasises its components' roles as mediators, that is, as translating and transforming rather than simply transmitting.

<sup>280</sup> On parchment as animal skin, see Holsinger, p. 619. On medieval awareness of the connection between manuscript parchment and human skin, see Kay, 'Original Skin', p. 37. Indeed, there was a particular association in the later Middle Ages between parchment and the incarnated, crucified flesh of Christ, see Isabel Davis, 'Cutaneous Time in the Late Medieval Literary Imagination', in *Reading Skin in Medieval Literature and Culture*, ed. by Katie L. Walter (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 99-118 (p. 99). For the technique of applying gold leaf to the manuscript page, see Nigel Morgan, 'Painting with Gold and Silver', in *Colour*, ed. by Panayotova, with Jackson and Ricciardi, pp. 192-219 (pp. 193-94).

content, to associate the sacred materiality of the relics, reliquaries, and bodies described within *Elois* with the materiality of the book they hold.

The way MS Douce 94 recalls or imitates Eloi's sacred body may be illustrated by the pictorial content of the manuscript's decorated initials. A majority of initials in the codex depict the head and shoulders of mitred bishops, while other figures include kings, secular men and women, and nuns.<sup>281</sup> The images do not directly illustrate the content of the chapters they introduce, but are generic representations of the sorts of characters that populate *Elois*: kings such as Chlothar and Dagobert, or the nuns at Eloi's Solignac foundation (Figures 7-8).<sup>282</sup> The images are frequently repeated and closely resemble each other. These repetitions of similar images, coupled with the initials' disjunction from the text's content, suggest that the initials might form their own internal networks of association within the manuscript, visually linking chapters not explicitly linked by the text itself.<sup>283</sup> MS Douce 94's initials take on an internal agency, prompting associations independently of the text's linear narrative progression. The semi-personified, semi-abstracted nature of the repeated faces on the manuscript's pages is particularly notable among the high proportion of bishops (that is, the same 'type' as Eloi) depicted (see Figure 9). The reiteration of bishops' bodies on the page acts as a sort of abstraction of Eloi's body that allows the book to repeatedly represent the saint's absent form and to provide a support for an encounter with that form. The concentration of images of bishops is densest after Eloi has died and his body has become a relic to be fought over: of the eight chapters following Eloi's death, six are illustrated with mitred bishops. Eloi's death draws attention to his body, which becomes increasingly visible and available, albeit in mediated form, as the manuscript multiplies representations of bodies that resemble his own. The manuscript's material and pictorial content intervenes in experiences of Eloi's body, which are both inflected by and independent from *Elois*' textual content.

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<sup>281</sup> The manuscript contains thirty-two inhabited initials (around half of its total number of initials). The precise figures are: twelve bishops; ten kings, and one male figure wearing a smaller crown; four bareheaded laymen; three lay women, two veiled and one crowned; two nuns.

<sup>282</sup> On the potentially disruptive, interruptive independence of manuscript images from text, see Michael Camille, 'The Book of Signs: Writing and Visual Difference in Gothic Manuscript Illumination', *Word & Image*, 1.2 (1985), 133-48 (pp. 138-39).

<sup>283</sup> Particularly given the often mnemonic function of manuscript images, designed to aid the organisation and integration of readers' recollections of the text, see Camille, 'The Book of Signs', p. 138.





Figure 7. Chapter LIX, crowned male figure, 1294, gold leaf and ink on parchment, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 94, fol. 139<sup>v</sup>.



Figure 8. Chapter LVIII, nun, 1294, gold leaf and ink on parchment, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 94, fol. 133<sup>r</sup>.



Figure 9. Chapter LXIII, mitred bishop, 1294, gold leaf and ink on parchment, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 94, fol. 160<sup>v</sup>.

In addition to these inhabited initials depicting generalised figures, the manuscript once contained a handful of historiated initials depicting identifiable narrative scenes.<sup>284</sup> A surviving example of this use of historiated initials would be the large seven-line initial illustrating Eloi's cure of a madman (Figure 10). At one point, the manuscript contained at least two more such illustrations, now lost. An entire folio has been removed from the book's second quire between fols 9 and 10, but a faint impression on fol. 10<sup>r</sup> testifies to the erstwhile presence of an image of Eloi in conversation with a crowned figure on the facing page (Figure 11). While this sort of loss might well be due to an accident that occurred during transmission or rebinding, some parts of the manuscript have been deliberately removed. For instance, on fol. 147<sup>r</sup> another seven-line initial – presumably historiated because of its size – has been carefully cut out (Figure 12).<sup>285</sup> Although this sort of manuscript damage is difficult to date, a note at the top of this page by Francis Douce (1757-

<sup>284</sup> See definitions in Michelle P. Brown, *Understanding Illuminated Manuscripts: A Guide to Technical Terms* (London: British Library, 1994), pp. 68, 72.

<sup>285</sup> As noted above, a number of other folios are missing from the manuscript. The collation of Douce 94 is as follows: 23<sup>8</sup>; 1<sup>8</sup> wants 1-4 (fols 1-4), 2<sup>8</sup> wants 6 (fols 5-11), 20 four (fols 143-46) (exact arrangement of missing folios unclear due to rebinding), 23<sup>8</sup> + 1 after folio 8 (fols 163-71).

1834), in whose collection MS Douce 94 was once included, indicates that it at least predates his possession.<sup>286</sup> It is entirely possible that this extraction post-dates the Middle Ages, motivated by the images' aesthetic or monetary value; it is also possible that these images, which might be taken as depictions of the saint's body, were extracted for devotional purposes.<sup>287</sup> While acknowledging the speculative nature of this enquiry when it comes to *Elois's* medieval readership, I want to briefly consider the implications of this latter possibility on the faithful's experience of Eloi, and to explore how these excisions affect the experience of reading this text in its current manuscript form. This exploration underlines the ways the manuscript as material artefact (or rather network of interconnected components) has an agency of its own that produces responses in those who encounter it.



Figure 10. Chapter LIV, Eloi (right, in episcopal regalia) curing a madman (centre), 1294, gold leaf and ink on parchment, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 94, fol. 119<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>286</sup> Douce's annotation curses whoever removed the initial ('Anathema fit qui literam abscidit!'). Douce has inserted some notes into the front of the manuscript, allowing for a comparison of the hands.

<sup>287</sup> Stella Panayotova's study of the extraction of illuminations for private collection in the Middle Ages and beyond emphasises a particular concentration of the excision of illuminations for their monetary and aesthetic value around the turn of the nineteenth century, 'From Vandalism to Reconstruction', in *Colour*, ed. by Panayotova, with Jackson and Ricciardi, pp. 162-91 (pp. 163-64).



Figure 11. Impression of lost illustration, 1294, ink on parchment, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 94, fol. 10<sup>r</sup>.



Figure 12. Chapter LXVIII, remains of removed illustration, 1294, gold leaf and ink on parchment, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 94, fol. 147<sup>r</sup>.



The treatment of the manuscript and its images as potentially sacred artefacts would resonate, as noted above, with broader medieval conceptions of books as sacred objects.<sup>288</sup> Manuscript images held particular sacred potential. Kathryn Rudy identifies a variety of ways in which medieval readers engaged in tactile interactions with their books, kissing, touching, and indeed extracting images of Christ and saints as an aid to devotion, in search of sacred contact and miraculous intercession.<sup>289</sup> Manuscripts' miracle-working potential was not limited to their visual components: several saints, including the influential Martin, boast miracles in which the reading and handling of their *Vitae* produces healing.<sup>290</sup> The potential agency of vernacular hagiography in particular to function as a relic-like sacred artefact is driven home by the popularity of French lives of Saint Margaret, which were inscribed on parchment amulets and girdles as an aid to safe childbirth.<sup>291</sup> This widespread medieval belief in the miracle-working potential of manuscript images and hagiographic texts in Latin and French suggests that a manuscript like MS Douce 94 might fulfil some of the

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<sup>288</sup> See Don C. Skemer, *Binding Words: Textual Amulets in the Middle Ages* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), p. 55 on the fluid boundaries between textual amulets, sacred books, and relics.

<sup>289</sup> Rudy, 'Dirty Books', para. 1 of 64; 'Kissing Images', pp. 21, 26, and especially p. 30 on the extraction of images of Christ.

<sup>290</sup> For example, the French life of Martin, composed by Péan Gatineau c. 1229-50, narrates how a charter ('chartre') containing a rhymed version of Martin's life ('Versefier toute sa vie'), is placed on a sick supplicant who recovers his health from this contact: 'La chartre a puis sus lui posee, | Si a cil santé recovree' (*Martin*, 4861-72). On *Martin's* date, see Sharon Farmer, *Communities of Saint Martin: Legend and Ritual in Medieval Tours* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 279; and on the text's authorship, Tony Hunt, 'A Forgotten Author – Péan Gatineau', *French Studies*, 58.3 (2004) 313-26 (p. 313).

<sup>291</sup> L'Estrange, pp. 60-62. The use of Margaret's vernacular lives as textual amulets for childbirth was extensive and enduring, as examples survive from across several centuries in both France and England. L'Estrange discusses in particular New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M.1092 (1491, France), a scroll which also contains a worn image of the saint alongside Margaret's verse *Vie* and prayers to Margaret, Mary, and Genevieve. A further two birth scrolls containing Wace's Anglo-Norman version of Margaret's life survive from the fifteenth century: London, Wellcome Library, MS 804 (c. 1465); London, Wellcome Library, MS 804A (c. 1485). Carolus-Barré (p. 261) discusses a fourteenth-century continental French folded parchment amulet, now Marseille, Musée des civilisations de la Méditerranée, MS 1977.2.1. Skemer (p. 241) points to a much earlier French birthing amulet, the late thirteenth-century Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS nouvelles acquisitions françaises 4267. Finally, Alphonse describes another late thirteenth-century birthing amulet of parchment folded and cut into medallions containing Margaret's life in Occitan verse, demonstrating the spread of this tradition, pp. 293-99; Alphonse also prints a facsimile, Plate II. As Carolus-Barré points out, the connection between Margaret and childbirth is connected to her miraculous escape from the stomach of a dragon, p. 270.

functions of relics, by enabling sacred contact through its text and illuminations.<sup>292</sup> The extracted image on fol. 174<sup>r</sup> opens the chapter which describes Eloi's death; it is plausible that the image depicted the saint around the moment of his death and perhaps even represented his dead body. Any depiction of Eloi's corpse at the moment it fully transforms into a relic would have been particularly sought after as a source of contact with the saint's miraculous or curative powers – a characteristic that would also have made the image particularly susceptible to extraction.<sup>293</sup> It is possible that the manuscript's depictions of Eloi's saintly body were treated as sacred artefacts in their own right and were extracted as talismans that might enable even greater proximity to the saint. This deliberate damage to the manuscript suggests that it too, like the traces of Eloi's hands on the shrines he crafts, or the rich garments he distributes, might transmit something of Eloi's saintly presence and miraculous *virtus*.

Regardless of what motivated the extraction of these images or the loss of the missing folios, the manuscript bears witness to its absent components, making its fragmentation plain to the viewer.<sup>294</sup> Indeed, part of the value of thinking with ANT is the way this theory moves away from questions of uniquely human intentionality to consider other forms of nonhuman agency. In the context of the present discussion, such an approach foregrounds how the manuscript (as a composite, fragmented artefact) might solicit certain responses from its readers. Whatever the reason was for removing these images, the traces they leave behind attest to the many complex networks of circulation and collection into which the manuscript and its contents are enlisted. The desire of some unknown hands to collect a part of the manuscript resonates with Eloi's own desire to amass a private collection of relics, reliquaries, and books, re-contextualising and assembling diverse artefacts into new personalised arrangements. Within and through *Elois*, material artefacts seem to generate a desire to collect, that is, not only to possess, but also to draw objects into new networks in which their meaning is transformed. Moreover, as observed earlier

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<sup>292</sup> This is something I return to throughout the thesis, considering how the text provides different forms of access to the saint, see pp. 154-58, 209-11, 289-305.

<sup>293</sup> Branner makes a similar speculation about the fragmentation of a thirteenth-century illustrated roll of the saint, p. 58.

<sup>294</sup> As Arthur Bahr argues, reading the content and aesthetics of medieval texts in light of the fragmentation of their manuscripts can be fruitful even when the reasons behind their fragmentation remain obscure, *Fragments and Assemblages: Forming Compilations of Medieval London* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013), pp. 40-44.

on, the act of extraction is charged with sacred potential in this text: Eloi himself extracts relics from Quentin's bleeding body, evoking the bodily mutilation suffered by Quentin at his martyrdom. The manuscript's mutilation echoes that of Quentin both at his martyrdom and during Eloi's *inventio*, in a dense temporal network linking the distant past to the moment of reading, a network that again fosters associations between the pages of the book and the saintly bodies it describes. The extraction of images also resonates with Eloi's own distribution of his clothing, as an act that extends the reach of the saint's presence through the dispersal of the objects with which he comes into contact. Indeed, both manuscript and saint are implicated in networks that become apparent through absence as much as presence. The connections between entities become visible in lacunae that gesture towards that which is elsewhere or which has been translated and transformed into something else. The manuscript and its images form part of the expansive network of bodies and objects that extend Eloi's presence beyond the confines of his living, physical body, rendering the saint enduringly accessible to the reader of his life, across temporal and spatial distances. If Eloi forges multiple intersecting networks within the text through his shrine building and personal collecting, the manuscript of his life continues to generate new sacred and material networks that leave their enduring traces on the page.

## Translating

The potential for resemblance and connection between saintly body and text is foregrounded in the various translations operated through *Elois's* manuscript, as well as in the saint's wider cult. These translations encompass both the linguistic transferral of texts and the physical movement of saintly relics, both of which involve the transformation and potential dislocation of meaning.<sup>295</sup> To close this chapter, I consider how the intertwined questions of linguistic and bodily translation intersect with the complex of ideas about collection that I have already explored in *Elois*. While the Latin *Vita Eligii* presents itself as the work of a single, saintly source, Saint Ouen, whose authority rests on his proximity to Eloi during his

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<sup>295</sup> See Geary, *Furta Sacra*, p. 7.

lifetime, the French translation presents itself as a collective enterprise.<sup>296</sup> The collective nature of the French text is connected to the textual processes that contribute to its creation. The anonymous translator's first-person narrative voice frames *Elois* as a work derived from another text ('Je truis escrit en chest istoire' (93b)). Nestled within this translation, several episodes are presented in the direct voice of Ouen: '[Sains Oains] dist: Quant jou ere enfanchons' (19b). The manuscript's scribe, Gerard de Montreuil, names himself in a final colophon (fol. 171<sup>r</sup>), asserting his role in *Elois*'s collective production. Moreover, the colophon is presented in the voice of the book itself, which declares: 'si mesclist Gerars de Monsteruel', a phrasing that gives the book a speaking agency of its own. The narrative (and manuscript) that transmits Eloi's sainthood thus highlights that – like the saint it glorifies – it is a composite, collective network incorporating a range of human and nonhuman agencies.

Within *Elois* there is a sense that the collective network of the text (and the book containing it) can be supplemented, as it remains open to further additions, transformations, and continuations. This potential for endless extension finds a correlative in Latour's concept of networks, which can always be extended through the unfolding of new associations.<sup>297</sup> Drawing on a well-worn trope of the insufficiency of language to contain the sacred, the translator describes how Eloi's deeds exceed his narrative capabilities (26b, 68a).<sup>298</sup> The text's incompleteness in relation to its overflowing subject matter is expressed in terms of the text as material assemblage:

Langemains, parchemins et chire,  
 Fauroient ains c'on peust dire,  
 N'escire ses fais, ne ses dis,  
 Se il pooit vivre tous dis  
 (79b)<sup>299</sup>

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<sup>296</sup> Notwithstanding the likelihood of Carolingian rewritings, see Masmonteil, pp. 9-10. *Elois* does not devote many lines to a self-reflexive examination of its own methods of translation. As mentioned above, the beginning of the manuscript is missing, and it is possible that the text once contained a prologue engaging more fully with these questions.

<sup>297</sup> Latour, 'On Actor-Network Theory', pp. 371-72.

<sup>298</sup> Ogden, p. 73.

<sup>299</sup> This is not an image that appears in the Latin *Vita Eligii*. This sense of textual incompleteness is mirrored by the mutilated manuscript's incompleteness, discussed above, pp. 104-09.



Eloi's deeds exceed not only the writer's ability, but also the materials, the parchment and wax tablets, on which he writes. The conglomeration of words and matter that is the text remains necessarily incomplete. In a reminder of the capacity of elements within a network to compete as well as collaborate, the manuscript's collection of voices manifests a tension between incompleteness and a drive towards closure. Gerard's prose colophon announces: 'Chi furent tout li glorieus miracle. *que mesires sains Eloys [...] fist*', imposing completion and finalised textual boundaries. Yet the text continues to resist this completion. Although *Elois* comprises only the *Vita*'s first two books, the translator includes a prayer that God also allow him to translate Ouen's third book, which contains Eloi's posthumous miracles (64b). It remains unclear whether this translation project was never completed, was a separate project that has not survived, or was originally a part of *Elois* not copied during transmission. What is clear is that the text of *Elois* has an agency of its own that works against Gerard's stated intentions, continuing to gesture towards its own incompleteness and eternally suspending its final closure.

This evidence of something missing – exacerbated by the manuscript's mutilation and missing folios – seems to encourage the participation of new elements in this uncompleted network. Two marginal annotations declaring the book's ownership indicate how the textual artefact continues to accrue additional voices and supplementary information as it moves through time and space. On the blank ruled lines underneath the end of a chapter on fol. 118<sup>v</sup>, an early seventeenth-century hand has written:<sup>300</sup>

Ce present livre appartient a labbaye  
De saint eloy de noyon,  
Celuy qui le desrobera.  
Excommuniez de droit sera.  
Sil ne faict satisfaction  
Le rendant a la maison

The annotation's insertion within the main text's ruled margins, the apparent imitation of the manuscript's hand, as well as its composition in rhyming couplets, foster resemblance with *Elois* (Figure 13). The annotation generates its absorption into the body of *Elois*, perhaps seeking to imbue its ownership declaration with the

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<sup>300</sup> The hand of this annotation is the same as that of the later inscription on fol. 171<sup>v</sup> detailing the manuscript's return to the monastery in 1605.

saint's punitive power. This not only reflects the manuscript's circulation through networks of institutional possession, but also points again to the book's liveliness: the manuscript itself claims the power to excommunicate its handler. The spaces left on the manuscript's pages continue to solicit new interventions as the book confounds its scribe's declaration of completion.

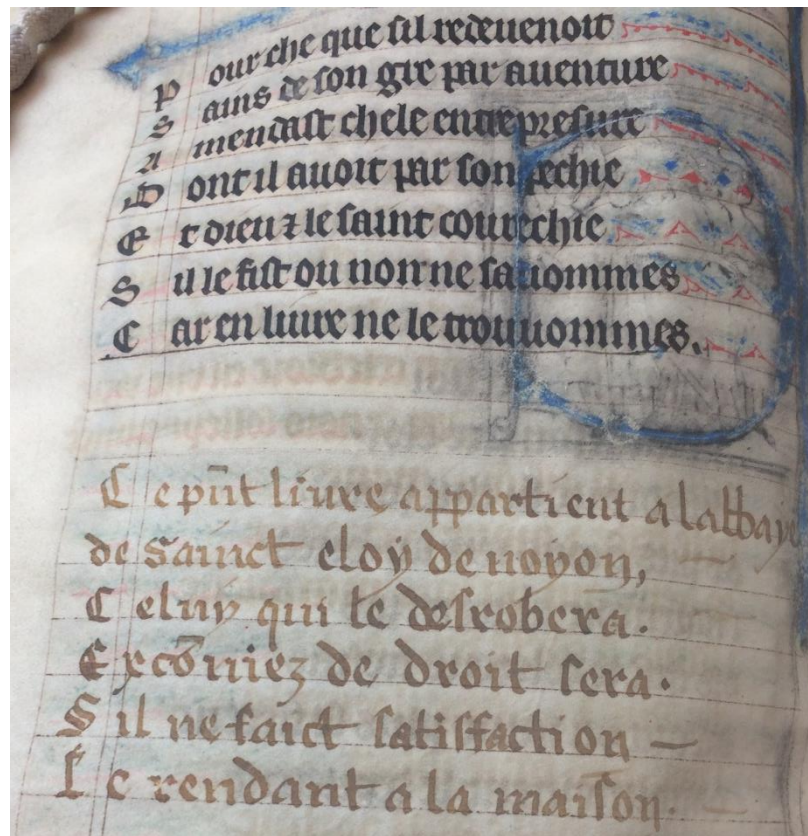


Figure 13. Early seventeenth-century annotation indicating ownership, ink on parchment, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 94, fol. 118<sup>v</sup>.

The manuscript's tensions between finitude and incompleteness are also incarnated in Eloi's body after his death. As discussed above, in *Elois*, the saint's corpse resists translation beyond Noyon. Eloi's resistance to bodily translation within the text contrasts markedly with the conflict raging over his relics around the time *Elois* was composed in the thirteenth century. In thirteenth-century Noyon two competing religious institutions claimed Eloi's relics.<sup>301</sup> The Noyon conflict

<sup>301</sup> This dispute is mirrored by similar competing claims to relic ownership across northern Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In particular, it is interesting to note that the relics of two of the saints mentioned in *Elois* also became swept up in local conflicts in this

stretched back to the ninth century, when Eloi's relics were moved under the threat of Norman invasion from their original site in the extramural monastic community of Saint-Éloi-de-Noyon, to the episcopal cathedral within the town walls.<sup>302</sup> In the centuries that followed, the relics' location (and the attendant right to attract pilgrims) fomented intense rivalry between these two institutions. In 1157, the cathedral elevated Eloi's relics, drawing attention to their ownership.<sup>303</sup> Undaunted by its lack of corporeal relics, the monastery established itself as an active pilgrimage centre, relying on the draw of Eloi's empty tomb and several contact relics.<sup>304</sup> In 1183, under pressure by visitors to display more substantial relics, the Abbot of Saint-Éloi-de-Noyon opened a chasse housed in the monastery, discovering Eloi's satchel (*pera*), containing nails associated with Eloi's *inventiones* of Quentin and Lucian as well as a range of unidentified bone and cloth fragments.<sup>305</sup> The conflict intensified beyond local confines in the thirteenth century, when each party

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period. Ellen Shortell identifies the thirteenth-century elevation and translation of Quentin's relics at his titular foundation as a response to the chapter's need to reassert their authority after a series of conflicts with the local townspeople in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, see 'Dismembering Saint Quentin: Gothic Architecture and the Display of Relics', *Gesta*, 36 (1997), 32-47 (pp. 34, 36). The cult of Martin of Tours was also a focal point for the complex disputes between religious and civic institutions in thirteenth-century Tours. In particular the saint served to focus communal identity and assert the authority of the canons who held the saint's relics over the rebellious townspeople of Chateaufort, Sharon Farmer, 'Feminine Folly, Burgher Calculation, and Anti-Communal Rhetoric in Thirteenth-Century Tours', *Studies in Iconography*, 17 (1996), 143-76 (p. 145).

<sup>302</sup> Olivier Guyotjeannin and Dietrich Lohrmann, 'L'Abbé de Saint-Éloi de Noyon en cour de Rome (1256)', *Revue du Nord*, 356-57 (2003-04), 681-96 (p. 681); Laquer, p. 681, Anne-Marie Helvétius notes the prevalence of these hurried relic translations under the threat of Norman invasions, as well as the potential usefulness of the disorder created to those foundations wishing to explain gaps and inconsistencies in their records of authentication and ownership, 'Les Inventions de reliques en Gaule du Nord (IX<sup>e</sup>-XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle)', in *Les Reliques*, ed. by Bozóky and Helvétius, pp. 293-311 (p. 295). Two of the verse French lives of saints mentioned in *Elois* describe a similar need to translate precious relics under the threat of Norman incursions: see *Genevieve* (3007-10, 3020); *Martin* (7768-69, 7789-90).

<sup>303</sup> This elevation was performed at a time when the cathedral was in financial difficulty, firmly demonstrating the interweaving of the sacred and worldly, Olivier Guyotjeannin, 'Les Reliques de saint Éloi à Noyon: procès et enquêtes du milieu du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle', *Revue Mabillon*, 1 (1990), 57-110 (pp. 62-63).

<sup>304</sup> The monastery's contact relics included the saint's slipper, and a cross attributed to him, Guyotjeannin, pp. 60-62.

<sup>305</sup> The discovery is described in the anonymous late twelfth-century *Inventio reliquiarum sancti Eligii* preserved in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS latin 12607 and edited by A. Poncelet, *Analecta Bollandiana*, 9 (1890), 423-36. The *Inventio* explains that the nails can be identified with Éloi's own unearthing of Quentin and Lucian, as the *pera* also contains labels bearing the words '*De Viromandensi, De Belvacensi*'. It strikes a notably cautious tone with regards to the other fragments found within the reliquary, stating that although they surely are holy, they cannot be securely identified with particular individuals (Chapter 3, p. 426).

appealed to neighbouring bishops, royalty, and the papacy to intervene in their favour.<sup>306</sup> Two papal investigations (1252-53 and 1256-61) ended in compromise, with both parties agreeing to honour the relics they held without obstructing the other for a decade.<sup>307</sup> The cathedral broke this truce before the decade was up, and conflicts continued to flare until 1462 when a final adjudication was agreed in the French Parliament in the cathedral's favour.<sup>308</sup>

The convoluted history of Eloi's relics might read as a catalogue of exclusively human subjects acting on and claiming possession of the saint's inert remains.<sup>309</sup> Yet considering the conflict through the prism of ANT-inflected thinking also draws attention to the ways in which nonhuman entities from bones to shrines to texts contribute to the communication of sacred truth and saintly presence. Just as within *Elois* the saint emerges as a composite entity comprising human and nonhuman elements, whose sainthood lies in the sacred connections he forges, his thirteenth-century translations demonstrate how his presence might not be concentrated in his body, but distributed across a range of body parts, artefacts, and texts.

The conflict's focal point is the presence of Eloi's relics. From the monastery's convenient unearthing of (noncorporeal) relics to the opening of the cathedral chasse, each competing party understands the revelation of relics to generate and guarantee the saint's presence.<sup>310</sup> It is at these moments of translation, when relics are moved and exposed, that the truth of saintly presence can be accessed, that the spiritual networks stretching between heaven and earth in which relics participate can become visible and comprehensible to the faithful.<sup>311</sup> In *Elois*, interactions with relics repeatedly forge connections linking Eloi to other saints and

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<sup>306</sup> Guyotjeannin, p. 64; Laquer, p. 682.

<sup>307</sup> Guyotjeannin, pp. 64-66; Laquer, pp. 633-34, 637. The cathedral's relics were reinterred in the presence of Louis IX, a royal intervention that demonstrated the interweaving of lay and ecclesiastic concerns throughout Eloi's cult, and contributed to the French aristocracy's renewed interest in Eloi from the thirteenth century, Masmonteil, p. 11.

<sup>308</sup> Branner, p. 64; Guyotjeannin, pp. 66-67.

<sup>309</sup> This is certainly the reading proposed by scholars such as Guyotjeannen and Laquer, who focus their investigations on key individuals in the squabble, such as (respectively), the abbot of Saint-Éloi and the investigator bishop Eudes Rigaud.

<sup>310</sup> See Guyotjeannin, p. 62 for the opening of the cathedral chasse.

<sup>311</sup> This need for material verification of the truth of Eloi's presence is very different from the 'scientific' obsession with the material world as a guarantee of truth Latour identifies as a hallmark of modernity. I discuss the relationships between translation and knowledge in more detail in Chapter Two, pp. 158-77.

other forms of matter. In Eloi's cult, interaction with his relics, whether corporeal or contact, likewise forges connections between him and his rival devotees, generating an experience of saintly presence. Eloi's relics actively produce the saint's authentic presence. Moreover, these translations reinforce the sense that the relic (indeed the saint) is not an isolated entity, but a conglomerate of divergent yet interdependent elements. Even as the cathedral asserted its exclusive ownership of Eloi, it actively pursued a policy of distributing fragments to promote the favourable reception of these claims.<sup>312</sup> Here translation inducts new entities and institutions into the cathedral's spiritual networks, while spatially extending the network that is Eloi's body. The outcome of this policy was the opening of the cathedral chasse, which revealed the partial, fragmented remains of Eloi's body, as well as a collection of documents verifying their authenticity and narrating their translation from the monastery.<sup>313</sup> The apparatus that manifests Eloi's saintly presence is formed of artefacts that are bodies and things, organic and manmade, material and textual, present and absent – categories whose boundaries blur within the network in which his relics circulate. The saint is a porous composite of multiple human and nonhuman elements, which can be both disassembled and added to.<sup>314</sup> The fragmentary nature of Eloi's body points once again to a lack of completion, closure, or stasis, by evincing the mobile, distributive, and dispersed nature of the saint's networks.

As observed in my reading of MS Douce 94, absences and lacunae in networks generate new associations and invite the enlistment of new entities. In particular, the spaces left by the translation of Eloi's relics generate text and narrative. The two competing sites of Eloi's presence in thirteenth-century Noyon

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<sup>312</sup> Guyotjeannin, p. 63. This dispersal placed relics of Eloi into collections of multiple saints, bodies, and objects, paralleling his own collecting activity within the text. For example, the monastery at Chelles held several corporeal and contact relics of Eloi in its extensive collection, Jean-Pierre Laporte, 'Les Reliques de Chelles, une sépulture royale mérovingienne', *Bulletin de la Société nationale des antiquaires de France* (1987), 290-303 (p. 299).

<sup>313</sup> Laquer, p. 630. The five documents found, as described by Eudes Rigaud, principal investigator in 1258, are transcribed in *Gallia christiana in provincias ecclesiasticas distributa: in qua series et historia archiepiscoporum, episcoporum et abbatum*, 10 (Paris: 1751), pp. 383-86. On the growing use of *procès-verbaux* such as this in reliquaries from the eleventh century, see Herrmann-Mascard, pp. 122-23. On the ways in which testimonial documentation enclosed in reliquaries takes on the function and qualities of relics, see Paul Bertrand, 'Authentiques de reliques: authentiques ou reliques?', *Le Moyen Age*, 112 (2006), 363-74 (pp. 366, 368, 372).

<sup>314</sup> See Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, pp. 22-23, 112.

both offer up bodies that are always materially incomplete and spatially displaced.<sup>315</sup> Eloi's fragmented saintly body appears to invite textual supplements that generate networks of connections between bodies and across time and space through both their narrative content and material presence, as in the documents discovered in Eloi's chase, which testify to the relics' authenticity.<sup>316</sup> The ways in which Eloi's relics – or their absence – generate textual networks is further reinforced by the compositional activities of the monastery of Saint-Éloi-de-Noyon, the site where Eloi's body had once been, and where MS Douce 94 was housed by the sixteenth century. In the 1260s the monks produced a comprehensive collection of documents relating to the relic dispute, textually asserting their connections with the saint's relics.<sup>317</sup> In the absence of substantial bodily relics, their functions – narrating and authenticating Eloi's presence, forging networked connections to him – are distributed beyond his body, to the texts his relics generate.

That Eloi's relics and their disputed presence or absence generated textual production provokes speculation that *Elois* itself was produced in response to this conflict, forming part of a broader thirteenth-century network of texts revolving around the saint. As Robert Branner notes, there was an apparent centuries-long hiatus in narrative composition surrounding Eloi between the ninth century and the mid-thirteenth century.<sup>318</sup> Composition accelerates from the second half of the thirteenth century as the conflict intensifies and interest in Eloi proliferates. This thirteenth-century burst of production focused on vernacular and visual composition, suggesting not only the cult's participation in new developments in hagiography, but

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<sup>315</sup> Of course, spiritually, the fragmentation of the saintly body does not prevent the relic from embodying the whole and undivided presence of the saint. See for example Lobrichon, p. 104.

<sup>316</sup> On literary supplements to displaced relics, see Geary, *Furta Sacra*, p. 8.

<sup>317</sup> The monks' collection of documents is now Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS latin 13777. Laquer has argued that this collection demonstrates the monks' increased awareness of the ways in which textual evidence of ownership might supplement the material evidence provided (or not as the case may be) by relics, p. 634.

<sup>318</sup> Branner, pp. 61-62. After the prose *Vita Eligii*, composed in the seventh century, there was a metrical *Vita* composed at the end of the eighth or the beginning of the ninth century; the metrical life is edited as *Vita sancti Eligii rethorice atque commatice expolita*, in *Catalogus codicum hagiographicorum Bibliothecae Regiae Bruxellensis: Pars I. Codices latini membranei*, 2 vols (Brussels: Typis Polleunis, Ceuterick et Lefébure, 1886-89), I (1886), pp. 470-83. In addition to *Elois*, there was also a thirteenth-century prose adaption of the *Legenda Aurea* into Old French. See n. 137 above.

also a desire to cater to new, non-Latinate audiences.<sup>319</sup> Although there is no concrete evidence linking *Elois* to the monastery of Saint-Éloi before 1591, it is certainly possible that the text and/or its manuscript were produced there or in association with the institution.<sup>320</sup> A series of illustrations on a mid-thirteenth-century parchment roll were produced, Branner argues, as a model for a mural in the refurbished monastery church.<sup>321</sup> The illustrations, which depict Eloi's life and miracles, attest to the monastery's investment in artistic production that narrated the institution's participation in the saint's sanctity and that made that sanctity accessible to pilgrims. Moreover, there is evidence that, at least in the early years of the century, the monastery's scriptorium copied and produced vernacular manuscripts.<sup>322</sup> Whether *Elois* or MS Douce 94 were indeed produced at Saint-Éloi, they represent a significant ideological intervention into the ways the saint and his relics were understood.<sup>323</sup> The emphasis *Elois* places on Eloi's rightful place of entombment, as well as the lack of information about his body's fate after this enshrinement, suggests the importance of the saint's presence at his original tomb, while also implying the continuation of this presence. *Elois* claims the saint's body is immovable, while envisaging his presence as transmissible and translatable through other artefacts and texts, at once asserting the presence of his body at Saint-Éloi and suggesting alternative means of encountering the saint. Moreover, the translation of Ouen's *Vita* into the vernacular makes the text and its affirmation of Eloi's presence at the monastery accessible to non-Latinate audiences, whether catering to those within the

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<sup>319</sup> In particular Branner notes that Eloi does not appear to feature in any of the numerous Latin legends circulating in this period, p. 62.

<sup>320</sup> Georg Graf Vitzthum notes that both the manuscript's script and the illumination appear to show a Flemish influence, *Die Pariser Miniaturmalerei von der Zeit des hl. Ludwig bis zu Philipp von Valois und ihr Verhältnis zur Malerei in Nordwesteuropa* (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1907), pp. 149-50. This does not preclude the creation of this manuscript for or at the Noyon monastery, given the mobility of medieval illuminators, the proximity of Noyon to Flanders, and indeed the extent of Eloi's Noyon-Tournai diocese, spanning both sides of the modern Belgian border. Alison Stones proposes that MS Douce 94's illustrator may be the Maître au menton fuyant, who she associates with the illustration of eighteen other late twelfth- and early thirteenth-century manuscripts, including devotional, encyclopaedic, and romance works in Latin and French, *Gothic Manuscripts 1260-1320: Part One*, 2 vols (London: Harvey Miller, 2013-2014), I (2013), p. 60.

<sup>321</sup> Branner, p. 65.

<sup>322</sup> Gautier de Coinci (writing 1216-33) describes how he sends his *Miracles de Nostre Dame* to be copied and illustrated at the monastery. Branner, p. 69; Busby, II, pp. 743-44.

<sup>323</sup> On the potential of vernacular composition as a tool to circulate ideology, see Blumenfeld-Kosinski, Robertson, and Warren, p. 2.

monastery, to the aristocracy's burgeoning interest in Eloi, or to visiting pilgrims.<sup>324</sup> Whether or not the speculative connection to Saint-Éloi holds true, *Elois* attests to the important ways in which textual production can mimic (and compensate for) the functions of saintly relics. Noyon Cathedral distributed relic fragments in order to generate networks of influence through which the cathedral's ownership of and association with Eloi might be asserted. In a similar fashion, the circulation of narrative might serve to assert the monastery's ownership of the saint through the creation of networks of listeners and readers.

Whether the text was composed in connection to the monastery or not, both translator and scribe produced their works in a context alive to the vital importance of relic possession and to the significant ways in which text could intervene to communicate, translate, or even resemble the relic. If the spaces and absences left behind by relic translations gesture to far-flung temporal and spatial networks, textual artefacts produce narratives that trace and explain these networks, rendering them accessible and intelligible to the faithful eager for contact with the saint. Text and relic are interdependent and mutually constitutive, each one in some sense generating the other, verifying and conveying spiritual power. Eloi's relics rely in part on narrative to authenticate their inclusion in extensive spiritual networks, while the networks generated by texts such as *Elois* are never purely textual, but forge associations between the spaces and artefacts they narrate. Alongside the saint's relics, *Elois* represents a vital element of the broad collective translating Eloi's sainthood to a medieval audience. Despite *Elois*'s emphasis on the saint's body as immovable and untranslatable, for the text's translator, scribe, and audience Eloi was experienced as multiple, mobile, and potentially accessible through pilgrimage as well as through the text itself. Throughout *Elois* the saint's body emerges as intensely intercorporeal, interpenetrated with the divine and material qualities of the sacred bodies he hoards around him even as he diffuses his composite, human-nonhuman presence beyond the contours of his flesh through the artefacts he crafts and distributes. The text and its manuscript participate in the saint's networks, asserting Eloi's presence and inviting readers to experience Eloi's body on the page.

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<sup>324</sup> On the reading of vernacular texts by non-Latinate monks, see Étienne Delaruelle, *La Piété populaire au moyen âge* (Turin: Bottega d'Erasmus, 1980), pp. 180-81; on the performance of lives of saints at pilgrimage centres, see discussion below, Chapter Three, pp. 209-11.



Through the text and book of *Elois*, Eloi continues to move through new sacred, material, and textual networks that enlist the reader in an intimate experience of the saint's composite body.

## Chapter Two. ‘Or gise entier e entier lief’: The Incorrupt Bodies of Audrey of Ely and Edward the Confessor

From the mobile, collectible, fragmentary relics considered in the previous chapter, this chapter turns to the very different networks traced by a different kind of relic: whole, incorrupt bodies. Whole bodies, I argue, offer an opportunity to explore a different set of sacred connections that rest less on relics’ physical circulation than on a complex interplay of vision, knowledge, and desire. I focus on two Anglo-Norman lives of royal Anglo-Saxon saints: Audrey of Ely (630-679, called Aethelthryth in Old English or Etheldreda in Latin), and Edward the Confessor (1003-1066). Both saints occupied important positions in the spiritual landscape of medieval England. Audrey, a twice-married virgin, nun, and monastic founder, was one of the most important medieval English women saints.<sup>325</sup> Her Ely shrine was an important pilgrimage destination until its destruction during the Reformation.<sup>326</sup> Edward’s cult was championed by successive medieval English kings, notably Henry III (1207-1272), who orchestrated the saint’s 1269 translation to a new shrine within Westminster Abbey, where his body remains in a post-Reformation tomb.<sup>327</sup> Yet Edward’s popularity did not extend meaningfully beyond royal circles, and

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<sup>325</sup> Virginia Blanton, *Signs of Devotion: The Cult of St. Aethelthryth in Medieval England, 695-1615* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007), p. 3; Cynthia Turner Camp, *Anglo-Saxon Saints’ Lives as History Writing in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2015), p. 64.

<sup>326</sup> Audrey’s shrine was the subject of major restorations under the episcopacy of Hugh de Northwold (1229-54), see Blanton, ‘Building a Presbytery for St. Aethelthryth: Bishop Hugh de Northwold and the Politics of Cult Production in Thirteenth-Century England’, in *Art and Architecture of Late Medieval Pilgrimage in Northern Europe and the British Isles*, ed. by Sarah Blick and Rita Tekippe, 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 2005), I (2005), pp. 539-65 (pp. 540, 547-48). On the enduring medieval pilgrimage to Ely, see Webb, pp. 40-42. On the shrine’s destruction, see Dorothy Owen, ‘Ely 1109-1539: Priory, Community and Town’, in *A History of Ely Cathedral*, ed. by Peter Meadows and Nigel Ramsey (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2003), pp. 59-75 (p. 67).

<sup>327</sup> Jean-Guy Gouttebroze, ‘Deux modèles de sainteté royale: Edouard le Confesseur et saint Louis’, *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale*, 42 (1999), 243-58 (pp. 248-49). For Henry III’s reconstruction of Edward’s shrine and chapel, see Sally Badham, ‘Edward the Confessor’s Chapel, Westminster Abbey: The Origins of the Royal Mausoleum and its Cosmatesque Pavement’, *Antiquaries Journal*, 87 (2007), 197-219. On later medieval royal patronage of Edward, see Katherine J. Lewis, ‘Becoming a Virgin King: Richard II and Edward the Confessor’, in *Gender and Holiness: Men, Women, and Saints in Late Medieval Europe*, ed. by Samantha J. E. Riches and Sarah Salih (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 86-100. On the shrine’s reconstruction by Mary I, see John Crook, *English Medieval Shrines* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2011), pp. 233, 303.

pilgrimage to his shrine did not take hold in the public consciousness in the same way as that to Ely.<sup>328</sup> Despite his cult's restricted appeal, Edward's status as the penultimate pre-Conquest English king granted him an important place in later medieval negotiations of Anglo-Norman identity and kingship.<sup>329</sup>

My analysis of Audrey's and Edward's saintly bodies uses Bill Brown's Thing Theory to extend the previous chapter's exploration of network theories. In that chapter, I discussed how relics circulate within diverse networks that stretch across entities of different types (people, bodies, artefacts, texts) and different scales (proximate, intercorporeal, temporal, spatial), while also making those networks accessible to the faithful. In this chapter, I consider how Thing Theory draws attention to the unruly nature of the entities that circulate in relic networks; to the sort of relationships these entities institute between viewing subject and object; and above all to the central role of visual encounters between relic and worshipper. Both of the texts I examine position incorrupt corpses as desired objects of sight that embody complex networks with other artefacts, time periods, spaces, and bodies. In both texts, the incorrupt corpse comes into view only in moments of transition (enshrinement, elevation, assault) in which the body shifts between visibility and concealment.<sup>330</sup> In these moments of flux, Audrey's and Edward's bodies, I argue, prove unruly, disrupting any straightforward encounter. Each of these saintly bodies is disruptive in its own distinctive way. Audrey's body is defined by its withdrawal from the gaze, emerging as a productive absence accessible only through an assemblage of accumulated surrounding artefacts. Edward's body is characterised by the excessive desires it provokes – although accessible to the gaze, the desire to see the body is never fulfilled, as the sight of the body always provokes a desire to see more. Audrey attracts nonhuman artefacts and resists human contact, whereas

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<sup>328</sup> Frank Barlow, *Edward the Confessor* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1970), p. 284; Tamar S. Drukker, 'Historicising Sainthood: The Case of Edward the Confessor in Vernacular Narratives', in *The Medieval Chronicle IV*, ed. by Erik Kooper (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006), pp. 53-79 (p. 54).

<sup>329</sup> Jennifer N. Brown, 'Body, Gender and Nation in the Lives of Edward the Confessor', in *Barking Abbey*, ed. by Brown and Bussell, pp. 145-63 (pp. 146, 154); Dyan Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage: Sexual Abstinence in Medieval Wedlock* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 123. On the appropriation of Anglo-Saxon saints by Anglo-Norman authorities, see Diane Auslander, 'Clemence and Catherine: The *Life of St Catherine* in its Norman and Anglo-Norman Context', in *Barking Abbey*, ed. by Brown and Bussell, pp. 164-82.

<sup>330</sup> I draw here on Howie's argument that the visibility of the saint is defined by the 'threshold' occupied between exposure and enclosure, p. 345. For further discussion, see below, pp. 165-68.

Edward participates in networks with the bodies of his supplicants, bodies which overflow their boundaries and intertwine with that of the saint.

These two saints encourage reflection on how the physicality of gendered holy bodies might inflect these bodies' relationships to the networks of people and objects that surround them. Whereas *Elois* focused on relationships between male saints, and was possibly produced in a male religious community, both Edward's and Audrey's lives foreground the role of women as participants in medieval literary networks. *La Vie d'Edouard le Confesseur* was produced c. 1163-89 by an anonymous nun from Barking in Suffolk.<sup>331</sup> The nun translates Aelred of Rievaulx's *Vita* (c. 1161-63), composed for Edward's 1163 translation following his 1161 canonisation.<sup>332</sup> Replicating Aelred's organisation of his material, *Edouard's* 6685 octosyllabic lines are divided into two books, recounting respectively the saint's life and posthumous miracles.<sup>333</sup>

Composed around fifty years after *Edouard*, the *Vie de seinte Audree* bears many similarities with that earlier text. Also composed in octosyllabic verse in England (although the text's language indicates the author's continental origins), *Audree's* 4625 lines are similarly divided between its eponymous saint's life and her posthumous cult.<sup>334</sup> *Audree* translates the *Vita* and miracles of the *Liber Eliensis*, a monastic compilation produced at Ely (1131-74) that transmits documents related to

<sup>331</sup> Nun of Barking, *La Vie d'Edouard le Confesseur*, trans. by Bliss, pp. 38-39.

<sup>332</sup> Aelred of Rievaulx, *Opera omnia VII: Vita sancti Aedwardi regis et confessoris*, ed. by Francesco Marzella, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis, 3A (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017); Aelred of Rievaulx, *The Historical Works*, ed. by Marsha L. Dutton, trans. by Jane Patricia Freeland (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 2005), pp. 123-243. Aelred's *Vita* has a widespread manuscript circulation: Marzella (pp. 14-25) counts twenty seven manuscripts from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries, largely of English provenance, with the exception of Avranches, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 167, a thirteenth-century legendary from Mont-Saint Michel, in which the *Vita* appears on fols 81<sup>r</sup>-96<sup>r</sup>. Aelred's *Vita* was itself the product of textual adaption, updating Osbert of Clare's *Vita* (1138), which in turn drew on an earlier anonymous biography commissioned by Edward's widow Edith (1066-67), see Domenico Pezzini, *The Translation of Religious Texts in the Middle Ages: Tracts and Rules, Hymns and Saints' Lives* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2008), p. 333. Aelred's *Vita* was the subject of several later adaptations into Latin and the vernacular, see Camp, *Anglo-Saxon Saints' Lives*, pp. 144-45.

<sup>333</sup> This is a common structural division found in both Latin and vernacular hagiography, see M. Dominica Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature and its Background* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), p. 246. All references to *Edouard* are to Nun of Barking, *La Vie d'Edouard le Confesseur*, ed. by Södergård.

<sup>334</sup> Marie, *The Life of Saint Audrey*, ed. by McCash and Barban, p. 6. Audrey dies just shy of halfway through (*Audree*, ll. 1981-2000), and the rest of the text is devoted to her miracles, interwoven with accounts of the transformations undergone by her foundation at Ely. All references to *Audree* are to McCash and Barban's edition.

Ely alongside a narrative of its saintly founder's life.<sup>335</sup> Like *Edouard*, *Audree* is composed by a female author whose identity remains enigmatic: she signs herself simply as 'Marie' (4624). As is common within vernacular hagiography, both *Edouard* and *Audree* translate their Latin sources with a degree of freedom. Scholars have argued for the influence of the nun and Marie's gender on their treatment of their sources, noting for example the nun's greater sympathy for an infertile woman healed by Edward and her emphasis on the equal chastity of Edward and his queen Edith, or Marie's interest in Audrey's subjectivity and the lives of aristocratic female patrons.<sup>336</sup> Regardless of their authors' identities, both the nun and Marie offer texts that differ significantly in style and emphasis from their Latin predecessors.

Each *Vie*'s manuscript contexts also foreground the significance of women as composers, patrons, and readers in these texts' production and reception. Both texts are preserved in the same English manuscript, London, British Library, MS Additional 70513.<sup>337</sup> This is *Audree*'s sole witness, although *Edouard* also survives in a further two manuscripts and a prose redaction. Inscriptions indicate that the manuscript was owned by the female religious community at Campsey Ash Priory in Suffolk by the fourteenth century, where it was read aloud at meal times, suggesting the book had an important communal function.<sup>338</sup> The manuscript is a collection of

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<sup>335</sup> *Liber Eliensis*, ed. by E. O. Blake (London: Royal Historical Society, 1962). On the *Liber*'s dating, see Blake, pp. xlviii-xlix. The *Liber* survives complete in two manuscripts, Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS EDC 1 (early thirteenth century, previously held by the Dean and Chapter of Ely) and Cambridge, Trinity College Library, MS O.2.1 (twelfth century), as well as in altered or fragmentary form in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 647 (late thirteenth century); London, British Library, MS Cotton Titus A i (late twelfth-early thirteenth century); London, British Library, MS Cotton Domitian A xv (late thirteenth-early fourteenth century); London, British Library, MS Cotton Vespasian A xix (1257-86). On the manuscripts and their dating, see Blake, pp. xxiii-xxv. See Marie, *The Life of Saint Audrey*, ed. by McCash and Barban, pp. 8-9 for the possible relationship between *Audree* and BL, MS Cotton Domitian A xv.

<sup>336</sup> On Edward, see Brown, 'Body, Gender and Nation', p. 152; Thelma Fenster, "'Ce qu'ens li trovat, eut en sei": On the Equal Chastity of Queen Edith and King Edward in the Nun of Barking's *La Vie d'Edouard le Confesseur*', in *Barking Abbey*, ed. by Brown and Bussell, pp. 135-44 (p. 138). On Audrey, see Virginia Blanton-Whetsell, 'Imagines Ætheldredae: Mapping Hagiographic Representations of Abbatial Power and Religious Patronage', *Studies in Iconography*, 23 (2002), 55-107 (pp. 77-78); Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, 'Wreaths of Thyme: The Female Translator in Anglo-Norman Hagiography', in *The Medieval Translator* 4, ed. by Roger Ellis and Ruth Evans (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1994), pp. 46-65 (p. 53).

<sup>337</sup> Delbert W. Russell provides a comprehensive codicological description and study, 'The Campsey Collection of Old French Saints' Lives', *Scriptorium*, 57 (2003), 51-83.

<sup>338</sup> The inscriptions are: 'Cest livre est a covent de Campisse' (fol. 1<sup>v</sup>); 'ce livre deviseie a la priorie de kanpseie de lire a mangier' (fol. 265<sup>v</sup>). Russell suggests these inscriptions are in

ten Anglo-Norman verse saints' lives compiled in the thirteenth century, including the lives of Foy and Thomas Becket discussed elsewhere in the thesis, and a further three lives added in the early fourteenth century.<sup>339</sup>

The Campsey collection exemplifies how thinking with networks illuminates how manuscript compilations can weave associations not only between individual texts, but also between saints, people, and places. The saints the Campsey manuscript assembles defy any simple categorisation; they are implicated in a variety of possible networks of association that draw together different configurations of texts, authors, and reading communities.<sup>340</sup> The manuscript is dominated by the lives of women, written by women, or commissioned by women.<sup>341</sup> While she resists ascribing overriding thematic unity to the collection,

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the same fourteenth-century hand as the manuscript's first quire, 'The Campsey Collection', p. 57. David N. Bell discusses the possible scale of the library Campsey nuns had access to in the Middle Ages, *What Nuns Read: Books and Libraries in Medieval English Nunneries* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1995), pp. 42-43. Campbell discusses the role of community in the Campsey manuscript in *Medieval Saints' Lives*, pp. 181-204.

<sup>339</sup> The thirteenth-century lives are of: Thomas Becket by Guernes de Pont-Sainte-Maxence (fols 9<sup>r</sup>-50<sup>v</sup>); Mary Magdalene, by Guillaume le clerc de Normandie (fols 50<sup>v</sup>-55<sup>v</sup>); Edward the Confessor by the nun of Barking (fols 55<sup>v</sup>-85<sup>v</sup>); Edmund of Canterbury by Matthew Paris (fols 85<sup>v</sup>-100<sup>r</sup>); Audrey by Marie (fols 100<sup>v</sup>-134<sup>v</sup>); Osith (fols 134<sup>v</sup>-147<sup>r</sup>); Foy by Simon de Walsingham (fols 147<sup>v</sup>-156<sup>v</sup>); Modwenna (fols 156<sup>v</sup>-222<sup>r</sup>); Richard of Chichester by Pierre d'Abernon of Fetcham (fols 222<sup>r</sup>-244<sup>v</sup>); Catherine of Alexandria by Clemence of Barking (fols 246<sup>r</sup>-265<sup>v</sup>). The fourteenth-century additions by Nicole Bozon are of: Elizabeth of Hungary (fols 1<sup>r</sup>-4<sup>r</sup>); Panuce (fols 4<sup>r</sup>-5<sup>v</sup>); Paul the Hermit (fols 6<sup>r</sup>-8<sup>r</sup>). For editions, see: Guernes de Pont-Sainte-Maxence, *La Vie de saint Thomas de Canterbury*, ed. by Thomas; Guillaume le Clerc de Normandie, *Le Romanz de sainte Marie Magdalene*, in *Vies médiévales de Marie-Madeleine*, ed. by Olivier Collet and Sylviane Messerli (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), pp. 131-61; Matthew Paris, 'La Vie de saint Edmond archevêque de Cantorbéry', ed. by A. T. Baker, *Romania*, 55 (1929), 332-81; 'An Anglo-French Life of St Osith', ed. by A. T. Baker, *Modern Language Review*, 6 (1911), 476-502; 7 (1912), 74-93, 157-92; Simon de Walsingham, 'Vie anglo-normande de sainte Foy', ed. by Baker; *Saint Modwenna*, ed. by A. T. Baker and Alexander Bell (Oxford: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1947); Pierre d'Abernon of Fetcham, *La Vie de seint Richard évesque de Cycestre*, ed. by D.W. Russell (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1995); Clemence of Barking, *The Life of St Catherine*, ed. by William MacBain (Oxford: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1964); Nicole Bozon, 'La Vie de seynte Elizabeth', in *Seven More Poems by Nicholas Bozon*, ed. by M. Amelia Klenke (St Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 1951), pp. 59-74; Bozon, 'Vie de saint Panuce', ed. by A. T. Baker, *Romania*, 151 (1909), 418-24; Bozon, 'An Anglo-French Life of Saint Paul the Hermit', ed. by A. T. Baker, *Modern Language Review*, 4 (1909), 491-504.

<sup>340</sup> See for example Baswell, 'Disability Networks in the Campsey Manuscript', (p. 159); Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, 'Powers of Record, Powers of Example: Hagiography and Women's History', in *Gendering the Master Narrative: Women and Power in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Mary C. Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), pp. 71-93 (pp. 87-88, n. 44).

<sup>341</sup> The collection's lives of saintly women are: Elizabeth of Hungary, Mary Magdalene, Audrey, Osith, Foy, Modwenna, Catherine of Alexandria. Its women authors are: the nun of

Wogan-Browne suggests that this concentration offers a range of saintly models for the aristocratic women who formed its audience both as individuals and as members of female collectives.<sup>342</sup> The texts themselves propose several intertextual, interpersonal networks between the saints within its pages, evoking the comradeship of Edmund of Canterbury and Richard of Chichester, or the pedagogical ties between Osith and Modwenna.<sup>343</sup> Wogan-Browne explores the geographic networks the manuscript traces between the places associated with both the saints within its pages and the writers and patrons who contribute to the texts' production.<sup>344</sup> Defying definitive, unified coherence, the Campsey collection's texts are thus embedded in a series of overlapping 'non-narrative networks' governed by intertextuality, gender, and geography, threading between and beyond the book's pages.<sup>345</sup>

Network thinking lends itself particularly effectively to considerations of textual transmission across multiple manuscript contexts, as well as of the ways in which a text's involvement in diverse textual assemblages can render visible connections that might otherwise remain latent. In addition to the Campsey version, *Edouard* survives in a further two manuscripts, Rome, Vatican, MS Reg. Lat. 489 and Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 1416.<sup>346</sup> The latter

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Barking, Marie, Clemence of Barking. In addition, the wealthy laywoman Isabella of Arundel was the dedicatee of Matthew Paris's life of Edmund of Canterbury, as well as the patron of the Latin source for Pierre's life of Richard of Chichester. Wogan-Browne, *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture*, p. 151.

<sup>342</sup> Wogan-Browne, 'Powers of Record', pp. 81, 87.

<sup>343</sup> Edmund and Richard perform God's work together (*Richard*, ll. 687-742). The lives of both Osith and Modwenna describe how the younger nun is miraculously saved from drowning when delivering a book to Modwenna (*Osith*, ll. 211-364; *Modwenna*, ll. 2585-2716). The latter relationship is examined in particular by Campbell, who considers the ways in which networks of female pedagogy and mimesis within Campsey encourage the reader to see herself as implicated in these networks through her own reading and devotional practices, *Medieval Saints' Lives*, pp. 188-91. Sara Gorman also highlights the community-forming impetus of the manuscript, arguing for its concern not only with female identity, but the specifically conventual identity of Campsey Ash Priory, 'Anglo-Norman Hagiography as Institutional Historiography: Saints' Lives in Late Medieval Campsey Ash Priory', *Journal of Medieval Religious Cultures*, 37 (2011), 110-28 (pp. 112-13).

<sup>344</sup> These geographic networks, Wogan-Browne argues, are concentrated in the east of England. Wogan-Browne, 'Powers of Record', pp. 81-82.

<sup>345</sup> Baswell, 'Disability Networks in the Campsey Manuscript', p. 159.

<sup>346</sup> Rome, Vatican, MS Reg. Lat. 489 dates to the twelfth century, and *Edouard* occupies fols 1<sup>r</sup>-35<sup>r</sup>. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 1416 is thirteenth-century, and *Edouard* occupies fols 157<sup>r</sup>-181<sup>r</sup>. All three manuscript versions of the verse *Edouard* are fragmentary: the Vatican manuscript is the sole text to transmit Edward's posthumous miracles, although it is missing the first part of the saint's early life (starting at l. 1462), while the Campsey version contains the beginning of the life but lacks a concrete ending (ending at l. 4240), see the nun, *La Vie d'Edouard le Confesseur*, trans. by Bliss, pp. 2-3.

incorporates a condensed version of the text into Wace's *Roman de Brut*, a verse Anglo-Norman history of Britain (1155).<sup>347</sup> While the Campsey manuscript embeds *Edouard* within a hagiographic collection, the text's insertion into the *Roman de Brut* reorients the text, drawing out its historiographic potential. This is not to suggest that the two genres are incompatible, but rather to reinforce the ways in which the particular networks forged by individual manuscripts draw to the surface particular textual meanings.<sup>348</sup> The Paris manuscript is also an important witness to the spatial connections manuscript transmission traces: the *Brut-Edouard* is recorded in a Picard dialect, attesting to the cross-Channel reading communities accessing this English saint's life.<sup>349</sup> That Edward's life served as a nexus of cross-Channel networks is further showcased by a fourteenth-century prose redaction of the nun's text preserved in a single continental manuscript alongside the lives of French saints such as Eustache and Denis.<sup>350</sup> Like the Campsey collection, this manuscript makes visible women's participation in literary networks: its suggested patron is Marie de Bretagne (1268-1339), Henry III's granddaughter.<sup>351</sup> *Edouard* and *Audree*'s transmission contexts emphasise the embeddedness of both texts and manuscripts in complex interpersonal, geographic, and textual networks – networks that they render present if not wholly visible.

This sense of how the text is embedded in potentially undecipherable networks can helpfully illuminate the intractable questions of authorial presence and

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<sup>347</sup> Jane Bliss and Judith Weiss, 'The "J" Manuscript of Wace's Brut', *Medium Aevum*, 81 (2012), 222-48 (pp. 229-33). The *Brut* is edited and translated by Judith Weiss as *Wace's Roman de Brut: A History of the British (Text and Translation)* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 2002).

<sup>348</sup> On genre see Gorman, p. 112; Wogan-Brown, *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture*, p. 210.

<sup>349</sup> The nun, *La Vie d'Edouard le Confesseur*, trans. by Bliss, p. 3.

<sup>350</sup> This manuscript is London, British Library, MS Egerton 745, where the prose *remaniement* occupies fols 91<sup>r</sup>-130<sup>v</sup>. The life of Eustache is fols 1<sup>r</sup>-24<sup>r</sup> and Denis fols 41<sup>r</sup>-72<sup>v</sup>. The manuscript is described in Paul Meyer, 'Notice du ms. Egerton 745 du Musée Britannique', *Romania*, 39 (1910), 532-69. Meyer edits the prose text in full in 'Notice du ms. Egerton 745 du Musée Britannique: 2<sup>e</sup> article', *Romania*, 40 (1911), 41-69 (pp. 45-62).

<sup>351</sup> Marie de Bretagne's patronage, and the interconnected familial and matrimonial aristocratic networks it traces across geographic boundaries, is advanced by Delbert W. Russell, 'The Cultural Context of the French Prose *remaniement* of the Life of Edward the Confessor by a Nun of Barking Abbey', in *Language and Culture in Medieval Britain*, ed. by Wogan-Browne, pp. 290-302 (pp. 291-96) and Alison Stones, 'The Stylistic Context of the *Roman de Fauvel*, with a Note on *Fauvain*', in *Fauvel Studies: Allegory, Chronicle, Music, and Image in Paris, Bibliothèque National de France, MS français 146*, ed. by Margaret Bent and Andrew Wathey (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 529-67 (pp. 545-48).



identity raised by *Edouard* and *Audree*. The women writers behind both texts provide minimal information about their identities, and have provoked much scholarly debate. *Edouard*'s author identifies herself as 'Une ancele' of Barking Abbey, yet deliberately withholds her name as unfit to be inscribed on the pages that record Edward's saintly name (*Edouard*, ll. 5304-11).<sup>352</sup> William MacBain argues on linguistic and stylistic grounds that the nun may be identified with the more renowned Barking writer Clemence, who composed the twelfth-century Anglo-Norman life of Saint Catherine.<sup>353</sup> Yet Jane Bliss's stylistic and syntactical comparison concludes that Edward and Catherine's lives are not by the same person.<sup>354</sup> As Bliss points out, 'any two generically similar poems, contemporary with each other and in the same verse form, are likely to contain some similarities of vocabulary', and these resemblances may be further pronounced between writers inhabiting the same spiritual and educational community.<sup>355</sup>

Although *Audree*'s author takes a less reticent stance than the nun, declaring that she records her name so that she will be remembered, her self-identification only by the name 'Marie' reveals little concrete information (*Audree*, 4624-25). As with the nun, Marie has been identified with a better-known woman writer. June Hall McCash proposes on the grounds of linguistic resemblances that *Audree* may be the work of Marie de France, who is supposed to have written several works of different genres (collections of *Lais* and of Aesopic fables, and *L'Espurgatoire seint Patriz*) in the period c. 1170-1208.<sup>356</sup> However, there are as many differences as similarities

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<sup>352</sup> Anonymity and a carefully deployed impression of modesty were far from unusual traits in medieval authorship. William MacBain's argument that the nun's reticence represents a form of specifically female timidity is not convincing, see 'Anglo-Norman Women Hagiographers', in *Anglo-Norman Anniversary Essays*, ed. by Ian Short (London, 1993), pp. 235-50 (p. 240); Wogan-Browne, 'Wreaths of Thyme', p. 50.

<sup>353</sup> William MacBain, 'The Literary Apprenticeship of Clemence of Barking', *AUMLA: Journal of the Australasian Universities Language and Literature Association*, 9 (1958), 3-22; Russell also takes this position, "'Sun num n'i vult dire a ore": Identity Matters at Barking Abbey', in *Barking Abbey*, ed. by Brown and Bussell, pp. 117-34 (p. 132).

<sup>354</sup> Jane Bliss, 'Who Wrote the Nun's Life of Edward?', *Reading Medieval Studies*, 38 (2012), 7-98 (pp. 82-91); Wogan-Browne, 'Wreaths of Thyme', p. 47.

<sup>355</sup> Bliss, 'Who Wrote the Nun's Life of Edward?', p. 78.

<sup>356</sup> June Hall McCash, '*La Vie seinte Audree*: A Fourth Text by Marie de France?', *Speculum*, 77 (2002), 744-77; see also Marie, *The Life of Saint Audrey*, ed. by McCash and Barban, pp. 5-8. Logan E. Whalen also presents a case for common authorship of *Audree* and the works of Marie de France, *Marie de France and the Poetics of Memory* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2008), pp. 160-73. For the work of Marie de France see: *Lais de Marie de France*, ed. by Karl Warnke, trans. by Laurence Harf-Lancner (Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 1990); *Les Fables*, ed. and trans. by Charles

between the works ascribed to Marie de France and *Audree's* Marie.<sup>357</sup> Indeed, Wogan-Browne argues that *Audree's* language is too late to belong to Marie de France's principal late twelfth-century period of activity.<sup>358</sup> Even if *Audree's* Marie could be definitively identified with Marie de France, this would open up as many questions as it answered: the name 'Marie de France' is a sixteenth-century concoction and cannot be conclusively associated with any identifiable historical figure, although a number of late twelfth-century women named Marie have been proposed.<sup>359</sup> Even the attribution of the three works conventionally associated with Marie de France is not certain.<sup>360</sup> The more closely Marie's identity is examined, the more elusive it seems to become, revealing not one single, readily identifiable authorial figure, but a shifting network of potential identifications.

As this brief overview indicates, the identities of the women who wrote *Edouard* and *Audree*, as well as the scholarly debates surrounding them, are complex and inconclusive. This chapter will not attempt to resolve the authorship question. Instead I consider how, by resisting the gravitational pull of the single, identifiable author figure in favour of a more interconnected, diffuse model of authorship, network thinking can productively illuminate our understanding of how both Marie and the nun frame their authorial identities. Marie and the nun hover on the cusp of visibility, providing enough information to resist anonymity while withholding the detail that would render their identities intelligible. This lack of biographical identification allows other facets of their authorial identity to come into view. The

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Bruckner (Louvain: Peeters, 1991); *L'Espurgatoire saint Patriz*, ed. and trans. by Yolande de Pontfarcy (Louvain: Peeters, 1995). The dates for Marie de France's activity are from Sharon Kinoshita and Peggy McCracken, 'Introduction: The World of Marie de France', in *Marie de France: A Critical Companion*, ed. by Sharon Kinoshita, and Peggy McCracken (Cambridge: Brewer, 2014), pp. 1-15 (p. 1).

<sup>357</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>358</sup> Wogan-Browne, 'Wreaths of Thyme', p. 57. She prefers to identify Marie as a member of the religious house at Chatteris mentioned within the text (*Audree*, 317, 3171), Wogan-Browne, 'Rerouting the Dower: the Anglo-Norman Life of St. Audrey of Marie (of Chatteris?)', *Power of the Weak: Studies on Medieval Women*, ed. by Jennifer Carpenter and Sally-Beth MacLean (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995), pp. 27-56 (p. 31); Legge also proposes this identification, *Anglo-Norman Literature*, p. 264.

<sup>359</sup> Michelle A. Freeman, 'Marie de France's Poetics of Silence: The Implications for a Feminine *Translatio*', *PMLA*, 99 (1984), 860-83 (p. 878, n. 1); Carla Rossi gives an overview of Marie de France's principal suggested identities, and proposes to identify her with Marie Becket, sister of Thomas and Abbess of Barking from 1173, *Marie de France et les érudits de Cantorbéry* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2009), pp. 81-116, 186-87.

<sup>360</sup> Miranda Griffin, 'Gender and Authority in the Medieval French Lai', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 35 (1999), 42-56 (p. 42).

nun's refusal to name herself in favour of emphasising her communal identity as a member of Barking suggests that individual authorial identity was not, for her, the principal concern. The embedded nature of the authorial persona in a religious community of women takes precedence over the isolation of a single, nameable author.<sup>361</sup> By self-identifying only as 'Marie', *Audree's* author – consciously or otherwise – invites associations with any number of lay and religious educated women who bore the same name and who were active in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century. While her historical identity remains unresolved, she makes visible the networks of female literacy and education in which she may have been embedded. Similarly, the unintelligibility of the nun's identity may in part be a product of the text's alienation from this original context. As Bliss points out, within the close-knit Barking community at the time of *Edouard's* composition the composer-nun's identity was presumably known without the need for written attribution, and she becomes unknown only when the text is read outside this sphere.<sup>362</sup> The questions of authorship and manuscript transmission foreground not only the ways in which artefacts such as the book, or the text itself, make visible diverse spatial, social, and literary networks, but also the ways in which the perception of these networks is dependent on the reading communities in which they are embedded. The textual artefact's intelligibility is generated somewhere in the space between the artefact itself and the viewer (or reader). If this is true for the texts of *Audree* and *Edouard* and the manuscripts that contain them, it is also, I will argue in this chapter, of broader concern for their treatment of the bodies and objects within their pages, which emerge as similarly complex, networked, and communally embedded artefacts.

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<sup>361</sup> Russell, “Sun num n'i vult dire a ore”, p. 131. See Rossi, pp. 162-64 for discussion of the vibrant literary culture of medieval Barking.

<sup>362</sup> Bliss, ‘Who Wrote the Nun's Life of Edward?’, p. 79. Of the three verse *Edouard* manuscripts, the author's identification with Barking is preserved only in the Vatican copy: the Paris manuscript subsumes the nun's work into Wace's text, and the Campsey collection omits any attribution.

## Audrey: saint as thing

From Audrey's earliest mention in Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica* (c. 731) to a surviving narrative pictorial cycle on a fifteenth-century Ely Cathedral retable (Figure 14), the saint's body in life and death is a site of dense and complex signification.<sup>363</sup> Common to these diverse sources is a preoccupation with the obfuscation of the body's visibility within containing enclosures that both conceal and reveal. Bede's description of the revelation of Audrey's incorrupt, saintly flesh during her first translation perpetually withholds the sight of this body.<sup>364</sup> Bede relates in the voice of Audrey's doctor Cynefrid how the saint's elevation occurs within a tent that blocks the view of all but a select few.<sup>365</sup> Outside this enclosure, access to Audrey is mediated through verbal performance: the songs of the gathered monks and nuns, Abbess Seaxburga's joyful cry as she discovers Audrey's incorruption, Cynefrid's voice as he recounts his experience of the translation, and indeed Bede's own narrative.<sup>366</sup> Seven hundred years after Bede, the Ely retable's depiction of Audrey's translation (Figure 14a) plays with similar questions of visibility and mediation: Audrey's body is partly revealed and partly contained within her tomb, encircled by Ely nuns whose bodies present her corpse to the viewer. The tensions between display and enclosure were particularly acute at Audrey's shrine. Like most whole body relics, Audrey was entirely concealed within

<sup>363</sup> For a full list of Audrey's medieval lives, see Blanton, *Signs of Devotion*, pp. 9-10. For discussion of the Ely retable, see *ibid.*, pp. 192-93.

<sup>364</sup> Catherine E. Karkov, 'The Body of St Æthelthryth: Desire, Conversion and Reform in Anglo-Saxon England', in *The Cross Goes North: Processes of Conversion in Northern Europe, AD 300-1300*, ed. by Martin Carver (York: York Medieval Press, 2003), pp. 397-411 (p. 399).

<sup>365</sup> 'Cumque post tot annos elevanda essent ossa de sepulcro, et extento desuper papilione, omnis congregatio, hinc fratrum, inde sororum psallens circumstaret [...], repente audivimus abbatissam intus voce clara proclamare: 'Sit gloria nomini Domini.' Nec multo post clamaverunt me intus, reserato ostio papilionis: vidique [...] corpus sacrae Deo virginis'. Translated by J. E. King as: 'And when after so many years her bones should be raised out of the tomb, they spread a tent over the same, and all the company of the brethren on the one side, and sisters on the other, stood about singing [...], and suddenly we heard the abbess within cry out with a loud voice: 'Glory be to the name of the Lord.' And anon after they called me in, opening the entrance of the tent: and I saw the body of the holy virgin of God' (Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1930), II (1930), IV. 19, pp. 108-09).

<sup>366</sup> Karkov, p. 400.

an elaborate shrine, only accessible indirectly through this mediating enclosure.<sup>367</sup> Audrey's shrine underwent many transformations, yet the dominant mode of experiencing Audrey throughout the Middle Ages consistently centred on the body's concealment.<sup>368</sup> Her body forms the focus of Ely devotion while remaining out of sight.



Figure 14. Robert Pygot (attributed), pictorial cycle on retable depicting Audrey's second marriage, her divorce, the construction of the monastery at Ely, and her translation, c. 1455, oil on oak panel, 121.5 × 54.5 cm; 122 × 52.5 cm, Society of Antiquaries: Burlington House, London (LDSAL 317; Scharf XI).

<sup>367</sup> The *Liber Eliensis* gives a detailed description of the shrine as it stood in the late twelfth century, III. 50, pp. 289-90. On the concealment of relics within reliquaries and shrines, see Hahn, 'What Do Reliquaries Do for Relics?', p. 305; Malo, p. 4.

<sup>368</sup> Audrey was translated twice in the Middle Ages, in 1106 and 1252. For the Anglo-Saxon shrine, see Simon Keynes, 'Ely Abbey 672-1109', in *A History of Ely Cathedral*, ed. by Meadows and Ramsey, pp. 3-58 (p. 25). For the Norman church, Eric Fernie, 'The Architecture and Sculpture of Ely Cathedral in the Norman Period', in *A History of Ely Cathedral*, ed. by Meadows and Ramsey, pp. 95-111. For the thirteenth-century shrine, John Maddison, 'The Gothic Cathedral: New Building in a Historic Context', in *A History of Ely Cathedral*, ed. by Meadows and Ramsey, pp. 113-41.



Figure 14a (detail). Robert Pygot (attributed), lower-right retable panel depicting Audrey's translation, c. 1455, oil on oak panel, 122 × 52.5 cm, Society of Antiquaries: Burlington House, London (Scharf XI).

This first section considers what is at stake in *Audree's* descriptions of visual encounters with Audrey's body, what seeing her body means for the viewer, and what being seen does for her body. Marie explores these complex negotiations of Audrey's visibility in her rendering of the saint's first translation. Sixteen years after her death, Audrey's sister and successor as Abbess of Ely, Seaxburga, embarked upon the project of enshrining her saintly predecessor:

De Deu out inspiration  
 De voir les os seintë Audree  
 Et qu'ele feüst remuee.  
 Mettre les vout honestement  
 Et garder les puis dignement.  
 Meint miracle out sovent veü  
 A la tombe ou ele a geü:  
 Lur establi de visiter  
 Cel seint tressor et regarder.  
 (2166-74)

As this passage indicates, the incorrupt body inhabits a troubled space of desire, vision, and unknowability. Seaxburga's desire to honour Audrey's body is entangled

with a desire to look upon this corpse, to see ('voir'; 'regarder') the treasure that lies within Audrey's tomb (2167, 2174).<sup>369</sup> Although this encounter with the corpse is multisensory, encompassing the tactile (the sisters wash and re-clothe the body (2264-65)) and the aural (as in Bede's description, the translation is accompanied by the singing of 'psalmes et [...] melodie' (2235)), it is clear that sight is the most highly valued mode of encountering the relic.

In particular, Audrey's visibility is concerned with exposing her incorruption to the gaze. While Marie's source, the *Liber Eliensis*, hews closely to Bede's description of the body's quasi-revelation – recounting the corpse's concealment beneath a pavilion to all but the privileged few, and filtering this account through Cynefrid's voice – her own version frames the translation as a more radical, unmediated exposure:<sup>370</sup>

Kant le sarcu eurent overt  
 Le cors virent tut en apert  
 Si entier et en tel semblant  
 Come d'une femme dormant.  
 (2237-40)

Dispensing with the concealing pavilion and the intercessory device of Cynefrid's eyewitness account, Marie narrates directly how Audrey's coffin is opened before the gathered populace ('Le pople' (2233)). Audrey's body is witnessed communally, the actions of opening and seeing ('eurent overt' and 'virent') ascribed to a general third person plural. Through the rhyming couplet 'overt'-'tut en apert', Marie underscores the total openness of Audrey's exhumation and bodily revelation. The

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<sup>369</sup> Marie draws here on the common metaphors of the saint's body as treasure explored above in Chapter One, pp. 92-93.

<sup>370</sup> The *Liber*'s version reads: 'Aptato igitur et desuper decenter composito papilionis umbraculo [...] aggere deiecto fossa defoditur et theca de pulvere elevator. Ipsa autem abbatissa sancta Sexburga ab aperto sepulture hostio cum paucis tanquam ossa elatura et dilutura ingreditur et, facto modico intervallo, repente de intus audivimus ipsam voce magna proclamare: 'Sit Gloria nomini Domini altissimo' [...] etiam nec multo post clamaverunt me intus, reserato papilionis hostio, vidique [...] corpus sacre virginis' (*Liber Eliensis*, I. 27, p. 45). 'So, a tent-awning having been fixed up and arranged in a seemly manner over the place [...] a trench was dug, a heap of earth being removed, and her coffin was raised from the dust. And the holy Abbess Seaxburh, after the casket-lid had been opened, went in with a few people, as if to raise the bones and shake them apart, and after there had been a short pause, we suddenly heard her call out from inside in a loud voice: "Glory be to the most high name of the Lord!" [...] a little while later, they called me inside too, and I saw [...] the body of the holy virgin' (*Liber Eliensis*, trans. by Janet Fairweather (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2005), I. 27, p. 59).

corpse's open exposure reveals that the body remains 'entier' and infused with liveliness, as if she were only sleeping ('Come d'une femme dormant' (2239-40)).<sup>371</sup> The corpse's wholeness is, for Seaxburga and her community, unheard of, disrupting their expectations that Audrey's body will be susceptible to natural bodily decomposition: 'Onkes mes n'oïrent parler | Ke cors peüst entier durer' (2243-44).<sup>372</sup> In its extraordinary wholeness, its excessive fleshiness, its continued aliveness, Audrey's body imposes itself on its watching audience as a remarkable *thing*, interrupting their desiring gaze and focusing it on the unexpected surface of her flesh.

The experience of Audrey's incorrupt body as described in this passage can be productively understood in terms of Bill Brown's distinction between objects and things. Brown's Thing Theory characterises objects as codified, intelligible, and thus unnoticed as part of an everyday panorama, whereas things emerge as objects' unruly counterpart, their 'before and after'.<sup>373</sup> For Brown, thingness is characterised by disruption: 'We begin', he writes, 'to confront the thingness of objects when they stop working for us'.<sup>374</sup> The distinction between objects and things is not one between two different categories of artefact, but rather describes a 'particular subject-object relation', a particular way in which the perceiving subject experiences an artefact.<sup>375</sup> Brown articulates these subject-object relations through recourse to vision, claiming 'we look *through* objects (to see what they disclose about history, society, nature, or culture – above all, what they disclose about us), but we only catch a glimpse of things'.<sup>376</sup> Brown emphasises the ungraspable, incomprehensible nature of things still further: 'thingness amounts to a latency (the not yet formed or the not yet formable) and to an excess (what remains physically or metaphysically irreducible to objects)'.<sup>377</sup> Things are at once both less and more than objects, both exceeding and receding from our grasp, our sight, our understanding: they make demands on the viewer.<sup>378</sup>

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<sup>371</sup> A common trope of incorrupt saintly bodies, Vauchez, p. 499.

<sup>372</sup> As Cynthia Turner Camp describes for the bodies of Edith of Wharton and Cuthbert, 'The Temporal Excesses of Dead Flesh', *Postmedieval*, 4.4 (2013), 416-26 (p. 417).

<sup>373</sup> Brown, 'Thing Theory', p. 5.

<sup>374</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>375</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>376</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>377</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>378</sup> Knappett, p. 185.



Brown's exploration of thingness is both distinct from and in dialogue with the sense in which Jane Bennett deploys the same term. As explored in the previous chapter, Bennett similarly emphasises the ability of nonhuman things to exceed their status as objects and show traces of aliveness, an ability she terms 'thing-power'.<sup>379</sup> She deploys this thing-power in order to break down what she sees as culturally engrained binary distinctions between human and nonhuman, people and things.<sup>380</sup> Brown's emphasis on the disruptive nature of things captures a similar sense of the material world's potential dynamism and liveliness that network thinking brings to the fore.<sup>381</sup> Like Bennett, Brown makes no allowance for the presence of the divine in the material world that is a central concern in medieval hagiography. Nevertheless, my discussion below draws out several aspects of Brown's work that intersect productively with medieval hagiography's treatment of relics. His identification of the ways in which things exceed and recede from human perception is a useful tool for examining the complex materiality of relics as sacred artefacts present both in the material world and beyond it, artefacts that are defined by their nature as or proximity to holy bodies, yet do not behave as ordinary bodies or objects.<sup>382</sup> Brown's work is a helpful way, in other words, of approaching the question of what makes relics extraordinary. In particular, his emphasis on the temporality of things, on the moment in which artefacts stop 'working' for the viewer and are perceived anew, captures something of the dynamic impact of encounters with the incorrupt body in *Audree* and *Edouard*, encounters in which these bodies are seen only in moments of transition between visibility and invisibility. Furthermore, considering relics as things highlights their dependency on networks involving entities of many different kinds: while objects can be considered in isolation, things are 'inalienable' from the networks they inhabit.<sup>383</sup> In the previous chapter, I explored networks traced through diverse processes: physical movement, tactile contact, textual collection. Brown's recourse to the language of vision to articulate relationships between people and artefacts helpfully brings into focus the specificities of the networks generated through sight at the heart of both *Audree* and *Edouard*.

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<sup>379</sup> Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, p. xvi.

<sup>380</sup> Bennett, 'A Vitalist Stopover', p. 48.

<sup>381</sup> Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, pp. viii, xvi.

<sup>382</sup> Hahn, 'What Do Reliquaries Do for Relics?', pp. 299-300.

<sup>383</sup> Knappett, p. 176.

In a way that resembles Brown's description of things, Marie articulates the relic encounter as an experience centred on sensory apprehension of material artefacts that prioritises, but is not limited to, the visual. Moreover, the visual encounters she describes appear characterised by a sense of both surplus and incompleteness. Before Audrey's translation, miracles are seen ('veü') at her tomb (2171): the entombed body does not need to be looked at in order to miraculously perform its sanctity, yet the sight of miracles at the tomb provokes a desire to see more, to glimpse what is ordinarily withheld from view.<sup>384</sup> Marie places greater emphasis than her sources do on the body's exposure to the gazes of a general public during the saint's translation; however, like the more concealed bodies of her Latin counterparts, the Anglo-Norman Audrey's exposed body resists straightforward visibility.<sup>385</sup> Seaxburga's desire to see her sister's body is at once exceeded and frustrated, fulfilled beyond her expectations and left permanently incomplete. The bones that Seaxburga expects and wishes to see (2167) remain perpetually out of sight, concealed beneath Audrey's whole, preserved flesh (2239). Even when the tomb is breached and the saint's flesh seen, the desire to see her bones casts the incorrupt flesh as a surface that itself covers and conceals. The saint's incorrupt flesh gestures towards a withheld bodily interiority that is kept out of sight and out of reach beneath the surface, precisely because Audrey's body is saintly and incorrupt. Audrey's incorrupt body is encountered simultaneously as a site of surplus and of as-yet-unrealised potentiality: as (in Brown's terms) an elusive thing.

Thinking about Audrey's incorrupt body in terms of its thing-like excess illuminates the ways it disrupts the ordinary linear progress of decomposition. Cynthia Turner Camp's reading of incorrupt saintly bodies in later medieval English literature stresses the way these bodies interweave corporeal and temporal excess.<sup>386</sup> The 'surplus of the corpse-thing', that is, the preservation of undecayed flesh beyond its natural timespan, is an unsettling 'eruption' of the ongoing liveliness of the past into the present.<sup>387</sup> As in Camp's examples, Audrey's whole, un-rotted body displays a complex temporality that renders the past viscerally present. *Audree* does not

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<sup>384</sup> On how the enclosure and exposure of saintly bodies enfolds desire, see Howie, p. 318.

<sup>385</sup> Here I echo the point made by Burgwinkle and Howie in a slightly different context: that the exposed body, saintly or pornographic, is far from unambiguous, but resists the visible even as it flirts with it, p. 2.

<sup>386</sup> Camp, 'The Temporal Excesses of Dead Flesh', pp. 417-19.

<sup>387</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 417-19, 424.

present Audrey's incorruption as a simple question of linear continuity between living body and dead flesh: rather her corpse makes present an accumulation of distinct moments that stretch across time. Audrey's bodily wholeness preserves the state of the saint's death, 'Si com le jur qu'ele fini' (2550), continually making the day of her death present and accessible to the viewing public. In its excessive fleshiness, the preserved body operates temporal collapse, visually manifesting the connection between the moment of translation and that of the saint's death and entombment.<sup>388</sup> Audrey's body proffers multiple, overlapping temporalities at once. The fleshy body's material excess – its thing-ness – makes manifest the saint's capacity to forge networks linking past and present.

The material disruption of ordinary bodily processes provoked by saints' extraordinary bodies is spiritually productive. Despite the intradiegetic surprise of seeing Audrey's incorrupt corpse, the saint's corporeal excess is readily integrated into established systems for understanding holy bodies. Her body's incorruption is categorised as a miracle ('A grant merveillie l'unt tenue' (2241)) that testifies to her saintly behaviour in life in a manner firmly rooted in her body. God keeps Audrey's corpse safe from decomposition because she preserved her virginity in life:

Ce ke la virge seinte Audree  
 Fu entiere en sarcu trovee,  
 Esprove et si testimonie  
 Ke virge fu tote sa vie.  
 Pur ce ne pout le cors souffrir  
 Ke enpirer deut ne blemir  
 (2807-12)

The whole corpse is a potent piece of evidence, communicating and confirming ('Esprove et si testimonie') Audrey's virginity. Audrey's preserved flesh encapsulates the ways in which relics act as sites of meanings that are at once intrinsic and irreducible to their materiality: through its incorruption, the saint's corpse signifies in excess of its nature as a dead body, acting as an embedded participant in networks that extend beyond the body's material contours.<sup>389</sup> Patricia

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<sup>388</sup> On the temporal collapses operated both by saints' shrines and hagiographic texts, see Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, pp. 77, 81, 84.

<sup>389</sup> Knappett has characterised the thing as 'inalienable' from the assemblages in which it is embedded (in opposition to the object, which may be disembedded and considered in isolation), p. 176.

Cox Miller identifies the relic-thing as a connective node that links heaven and earth, the spiritual and the material, a positioning that makes it a site of ‘surplus value’.<sup>390</sup> Similarly, Audrey’s incorrupt body interweaves bodily wholeness and the absence of corruption or stain (‘enpirer’, ‘blemir’) with the preservation of virginity. Her fleshy excess implicates her in a sacred network of associations that allows her body to be seen as a location of surplus value that connects the material and the spiritual; her body is an expression of meaning tied to but also beyond its sheer physicality.<sup>391</sup>

The interpretation of Audrey’s incorrupt body through the prism of miracle and virginity points to the ways in which the relic might also resist any strict categorisation as thing or object. The Ely community catch a glimpse of the corpse’s thingly excess, but as they look *through* the incorrupt corpse to the intelligible meaning it encodes and the existing cultural framework of sanctity it upholds, it seems that its thing-like elusiveness ‘evaporates under [their] objectifying gaze’.<sup>392</sup> In Brown’s terms, the relic is here intelligible, codified – it ‘works’ for the Ely community, for whom the sight of the body discloses important information about the sacred.<sup>393</sup> While the uncovering of Audrey’s body reveals its thing-like qualities of disruption and excess, the communal response presents this body as performing understandable cultural work: in Brown’s terms, as an object. As argued in the previous chapter, divisions between person and thing, living and dead, body and artefact are not particularly productive in the context of the relic, which inhabits and blurs all such categories.<sup>394</sup> Likewise, Audrey’s relics resist any hard border between object and thing, between understanding and alienation. Although Brown stresses that ‘things’ and ‘objects’ are changeable, relational definitions rather than

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<sup>390</sup> Patricia Cox Miller, *The Corporeal Imagination: Signifying the Holy in Late Ancient Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), p. 62.

<sup>391</sup> *Ibid.* The thing’s imbrication of matter and meaning is also central to Lorraine Daston’s exploration of Thing Theory, see her introduction to *Things That Talk: Object Lessons from Art and Science*, ed. by Lorraine Daston (New York: Zone Books, 2004), pp. 9-24 (p. 10).

<sup>392</sup> Knappett, p. 187. This encounter with Audrey’s body also recalls the ‘hermeneutic vision’ proposed by Emma Campbell, a mode of seeing the saintly body in which ‘vision and interpretation [...] bleed into one another’, framing the visual encounter as an encounter with the ideological significance of what it seen, ‘Sacrificial Spectacle and Interpassive Vision in the Anglo-Norman Life of Saint Faith’, in *Troubled Vision: Gender, Sexuality, and Sight in Medieval Text and Image*, ed. by Emma Campbell and Robert Mills (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 97-115 (pp. 104, 107).

<sup>393</sup> Brown, ‘Thing Theory’, p. 4.

<sup>394</sup> On the ways in which relics blur category distinctions, see Paul Binski, *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation* (London: British Museum Press, 1996), p. 12; Sofia Boesch Gajano, ‘Reliques et pouvoirs’, in *Les Reliques*, ed. by Bozóky and Helvétius, pp. 255-69 (p. 268); Geary, ‘Sacred Commodities’, p. 169.

ontological categories, his work might be seen to construct a binary opposition that does not hold true for saintly artefacts. Carl Knappett suggests that cult practices often attend to what he terms the ‘flicker’ between thing and object.<sup>395</sup> This shifting, intermediate state between familiarity and strangeness, tangibility and elusiveness, is closer to what we find throughout *Audree*. If Audrey’s body is an unruly thing, it is also – sometimes simultaneously – an object. My qualification of the saint’s body as a thing does not, therefore, strictly adhere to Brown’s divisions between subject and object, human and thing, thing and object. Rather, Audrey’s ‘thingly’ body illuminates the ways in which the relic exceeds such categorisation, remaining defiantly bodily and material, while also eluding ordinary expectations of bodies and artefacts.

Mindful of this nuancing of Brown’s work for a medieval sacred context, what does it mean in *Audree* to look at the extraordinary body that is the relic, and what precisely is seen in this encounter? In Marie’s text, encounters with Audrey’s body encourage reflection on the modes of perception that at times find comprehensible meaning in her body and at times only sublime resistance. If thinghood describes, as per Brown’s formulation, a ‘particular subject-object relation’ rather than a category of entity, the subject position of those viewing Audrey’s corpse is central to the body’s intelligibility.<sup>396</sup> The focus on the body that sees as well as that which is seen is particularly important in the context of medieval vision theories, which position sight as an intercorporeal exchange between a viewing subject and the object of the gaze.<sup>397</sup> Theories of intromissive and extramissive vision both stress the interpenetrating, transformative impact of sight on the seeing body and the object that it sees.<sup>398</sup> Moreover, as Marie’s focus on communal sight of Audrey’s translated body (‘Le cors virent’ (2238)) indicates, visual encounters with the saint are not simply about an exchange between two singular entities (subject and object), but about a broader network of participants. The seeing body is a plural, networked position rather than an exclusive one. To look upon the saint’s body is to enter into an intercorporeal network with it: meaning is

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<sup>395</sup> Knappett, p. 184.

<sup>396</sup> Brown, ‘Thing Theory’, p. 4.

<sup>397</sup> Biernoff, pp. 3, 41. Bennett explores the intercorporeality of bodies within networks, ‘Powers of the Hoard’, pp. 254–56, see discussion above in Chapter One, pp. 83–88.

<sup>398</sup> Suzanne Conklin Akbari, *Seeing Through the Veil: Optical Theory and Medieval Allegory* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), p. 24; Biernoff, p. 97.

generated through the connections forged between the bodies of the saint and her viewers.<sup>399</sup> Put simply, the identity of the viewing subject(s) matters, inflecting the ways the relic can be seen and understood. It is significant that the first translation by Seaxburga and her community is the only occasion on which Audrey's relics are openly seen: those who subsequently try to glimpse the body are miraculously punished.<sup>400</sup> The moment of revelation in which Audrey's body emerges as visible is embedded within, made possible by, a particular community.

Seaxburga's privileged visual access to the saint's body centres on interwoven questions of the viewing subject's identity and this subject's mode of seeing. Seaxburga's community are set apart from other prospective onlookers by their proximity and potential resemblance to the saint: this is the community that Audrey founded; Seaxburga is her sister, a holy woman and saint modelled on Audrey ('*Essample prist de sa sorur*' (2163)). There is a potential resonance between viewers and saint (shared community, sanctity, gender) that is not repeated in other attempted encounters. The text emphasises the legitimacy of Seaxburga's desire to see: her impetus to look upon Audrey's remains springs from God ('*De Deu out inspiration*' (2166)), and is entwined with the prior production of miracles (2171). Seaxburga's desire to see is already situated as an acknowledgement of the divine networks in which Audrey's body circulates, as an awareness of the sacred surplus to which the body provides access. If the saintly body is a thing that cannot be disentangled from the surplus spiritual networks in which it is embedded, the viewer's ability to perceive and decipher the presence of these networks nevertheless renders the relic at least partially visible, potentially intelligible. Seaxburga and her community's recognition of the networked, thing-like nature of Audrey's body grants them understanding of this body.

For the Ely community, to gaze at the incorrupt corpse, to perceive its excessive thingly qualities, is to see the networks it inhabits, the spiritual significance it incarnates. *Audree's* focus on the way the incorrupt corpse manifests Audrey's virginity exemplifies the body's capacity to make meaningful networks visible despite – indeed because of – its corporeal resistance. This visibility is clearly inflected by gender in Audrey's case. Neither Brown's Thing Theory nor ANT explicitly account for the role of gender in the subject-object relations they trace, yet,

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<sup>399</sup> Biernoff, pp. 17, 41.

<sup>400</sup> See below, pp. 147-53 for further discussion.

as the significant body of scholarship dedicated to the intersection of medieval conceptions of virginity and gender demonstrates, depictions of virgin bodies are profoundly invested in similar questions of disruption, agency, and the circulation of bodies in networks.<sup>401</sup> Without insisting on any strict gender binary, Marie's portrayal of Audrey's virgin body, I argue, suggests that this body's gender inflects both its perception as thing-like and the networks in which it is implicated. Although not the exclusive preserve of women saints, virginity, particularly in the face of violent assaults by pagan men, was the dominant mode of female sanctity throughout the Middle Ages.<sup>402</sup> Audrey maintains her virginity despite two marriages; she defies both familial pressure to wed (291-96, 794-99) and the violence of her second husband that provokes her flight to Ely (1279-1372). *Audree* foregrounds the saint's resistance to secular social networks of matrimony and procreation in which the bodies of aristocratic women circulate as objects of exchange.<sup>403</sup> Audrey resists absorption into networks that would render her intelligible as a gendered body that 'works' (in Brown's terms) as expected. Rejecting secular marriage and motherhood, Audrey vows herself to God, the eternal husband ('l'espous ky ne peust morir' (1166)). In life as in death, her body is socially disruptive but spiritually generative: she removes herself from established familial and societal networks to forge spiritual relationships with the divine.<sup>404</sup>

For Marie, Audrey's refusal to function as an object in networks of exchange is articulated as a re-orientation of her body towards the realm of the nonhuman: Audrey is described as a sacred temple that God protects from violation: 'K'il ne voleit que violé | Fuest cil temple seintifié' (1046-47). Marie rehearses common medieval metaphors for virginity that focus on the body as a sealed enclosure perpetually threatened by a rupture that it denies.<sup>405</sup> These metaphors of containment are not exclusive to female virgins, yet they clearly dialogue with Aristotelian conceptions of the inherently unruly, excessive, and incomplete nature of women's

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<sup>401</sup> Campbell, *Medieval Saints' Lives*, pp. 9, 14, 20; Salih, pp. 9, 11.

<sup>402</sup> Gravdal, p. 22. John Bugge argues that from the twelfth century virginity is increasingly reserved for women, while men are associated with the complementary but distinct virtue of celibacy or chastity, *Virginitas: An Essay in the History of a Medieval Ideal* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1975), pp. 80-110.

<sup>403</sup> Wogan-Brown, *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture*, p. 57.

<sup>404</sup> Campbell, *Medieval Saints' Lives*, pp. 98-99.

<sup>405</sup> See Lewis, p. 88; Wogan-Browne, 'Chaste Bodies', pp. 27-78.

bodies.<sup>406</sup> Women's bodies are improperly formed versions of male bodies, defined by lack and the instability of their porous boundaries: the hymen seals the body but may be broken, the womb has the capacity to be permeated as well as to contain.<sup>407</sup> In their polluting disruption, excess, and lack, medieval women's bodies might be thought of as participating – in a very different mode from Audrey's incorrupt corpse – in the unruliness of Brown's things. The metaphor of Audrey as temple space both resonates with and resists medieval understandings of women's thing-like bodies: the saint disrupts her social networks through resisting the bodily disruption associated with her gender, enforcing the solidity of her bodily boundaries.

Although medieval conceptions of virginity can focus intensely on the physicality of women's bodies, *Audree* demonstrates that they can also complicate notions of the gendered body. Virginity can function as a state of being, an orientation of desire towards the spiritual, a form of sexuality, a distinct gender identity, a 'challenge to binary gender and heterosexuality'.<sup>408</sup> Jerome's (c. 347-420) writings on virginity are an influential example of this challenge, framing the rejection of motherhood in favour of serving Christ as a cessation of womanhood to become more like a man ('mulier esse cessabit, et dicetur vir').<sup>409</sup> Indeed, the notion of the virgin as *virago* persists throughout the Middle Ages.<sup>410</sup> In *Audree*, metaphors like that of the unviolated temple situate the saint as materially distinct from her gender, aligned instead with the nonhuman. *Audree* envisages the saint's virginity as both physical and spiritual, describing how Audrey 'Unkes ne pot estre entamee | En cors ne en quer violee' (943-44), figuring the saint's wholeness as a question of

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<sup>406</sup> Edward is also described as a vessel for the sacred (*Edouard*, 1103-09), see below, pp. 159-61. On the focus of virginity on women's physical bodies, see Pat Cullum, "'Give Me Chastity": Masculinity and Attitudes to Chastity and Celibacy in the Middle Ages', in *Sex, Gender and the Sacred: Reconfiguring Religion in Gender History*, ed. by Joanna de Groot and Sue Morgan (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), pp. 225-40 (p. 228).

<sup>407</sup> Bildhauer, *Medieval Blood*, p. 93; Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, p. 109.

<sup>408</sup> See Clarissa W. Atkinson, "'Precious Balsam in a Fragile Glass": The Ideology of Virginity in the Later Middle Ages', *Journal of Family History* (1983), 131-43 (p. 133); Gaunt, p. 186; Mills, *Seeing Sodomy*, p. 250; Salih, pp. 2, 8, 11; Anke Bernau, Ruth Evans, and Sarah Salih, 'Introduction: Virginites and Virginity Studies', in *Medieval Virginites*, ed. by Anke Bernau, Ruth Evans, and Sarah Salih (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), pp. 1-13 (p. 3).

<sup>409</sup> Jerome, *Commentarius in Epistolam ad Ephesios*, *Patrologia Latina*, 26 (1845), cols 439-554 (III. 5, col. 533). Quoted and translated by Wogan-Browne as 'she shall cease to be woman and shall be called man', 'The Virgin's Tale', p. 291.

<sup>410</sup> On Audrey as *virago* in the *Liber Eliensis*, see Virginia Blanton-Whetsell, 'Tota integra, tota incorrupta: The Shrine of St. Æthelthryth as Symbol of Monastic Autonomy', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 32.2 (2002), 227-67 (pp. 255-56).



internal will (her impenetrable heart) as much as it is a physical attribute. Marie emphasises Audrey's internal efforts to vanquish her own fleshy desires (381-90, 1129-34).<sup>411</sup> The testimony of the saint's unblemished corpse fuses the spiritual and the physical, constructing the virginity Audrey worked for as intrinsic to her flesh and visible to the onlooker. Incorruption brings the internal efforts of the saint's chastity to the surface, making it visible through a bodily wholeness that nevertheless impedes access to what lies beneath this enclosing surface. Just as the fleshy surface of Audrey's incorrupt corpse rebuffs Seaxburga's desire to see her bones, the images of the saint as temple, her unviolated body and heart, all gesture towards the presence of a bodily interiority that is desirable yet perpetually withheld. Although the body draws the gaze, then, to some extent the networks it makes visible are more clearly decipherable than the body itself, which remains a point of resistant tension.

In a narrative that stresses the saint's bodily impenetrability, wholeness, and exemption from decay, the sight of Audrey's body nevertheless also explores this body's capacity for porosity, flux, and corruption. The disruptive temporality and corporeality of Audrey's wholeness is condensed into the single, overdetermined site of her neck. Audrey's death is caused by a swelling ('enfleüre' (1920)) that grows on her throat. To treat the tumour, her doctor Cynefrid performs an incision:

Comandé li ont k'il oveist  
 L'enfleürë et hors en mist  
 L'humur ke dedenz ert atreite,  
 Et il i ha la plaie faite.  
 (1959-62)

The growth is a site of fleshy excess, surpassing the boundaries of the saint's body as it swells, leaking internal fluids when it is punctured (1961-62): it attests to the interiority that Audrey's incorruption withholds. This wound is a visceral testament that Audrey's enclosed virgin body has also been ruptured.<sup>412</sup> The wound's evocation of bodily corruption negotiates the potentially troubling implications of

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<sup>411</sup> Virginia Blanton, 'Chaste Marriage, Sexual Desire, and Christian Martyrdom in *La vie sainte Audrée*', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 19 (2010), 94-114 (pp. 96, 108). This focus on the hard work it takes to resist the flesh might echo with the discourse surrounding male chastity, see John H. Arnold, 'The Labour of Continence: Masculinity and Clerical Virginity', in *Medieval Virginites*, ed. by Bernau, Evans, and Salih, pp. 102-18 (pp. 110, 112); Cullum, p. 228.

<sup>412</sup> See Blanton, *Signs of Devotion*, pp. 43-45.

the saint's status as object of a desiring gaze. Audrey herself interprets her neck tumour as welcome divine punishment for her youthful delight in wearing golden necklaces (1939-44). Women's ornamentation of their bodies with precious gold and jewels was a perennial target of medieval criticism rooted in biblical precedents.<sup>413</sup> These criticisms take aim at female vanity, a desire to be looked at that positions women's bodies as the object of an eroticised (implicitly male) gaze.<sup>414</sup> During Audrey's translation, this open wound, this site of potential sin, is revealed to be posthumously healed: 'La plaie k'avoit sainte Audree | En son col fu tute sanee' (2249-50). The saint's posthumous integrity is not merely an absence of decomposition, but an active healing, a divine imposition of wholeness: her corrupt dying body is perfected in death. Audrey's body, and her neck in particular, continue to attract the gaze, but the healing of her wound mediates the nature of this gaze from the erotic to the sacred – even as it recalls the memory of potential earthly sin.<sup>415</sup>

In her description of Audrey's healing, Marie diverges from her Latin source. The *Liber Eliensis*, following Bede, deploys Cynefrid's voice to describe the traces the healed wound leaves behind:

[M]onstraverunt etiam mihi vulnus incisure, quod feceram, curatum, ita ut mirum in modum pro aperto et hianti vulnere, cum quo sepulta erat, tenuissima tunc cicatrices vestigial apparerunt.<sup>416</sup>

<sup>413</sup> Máirín MacCarron points for example to the 'meretri[x] magn[a] [...] inaurata auro et lapide pretioso et margaritis' ('the great whore [...] decked with gold and precious stones and pearls') of Revelations 17. 1-4; and the admonition in 1 Timothy 2. 9 that women not adorn themselves with 'auro aut margaritis vel veste pretiosa' ('gold, or pearls, or costly array'), 'The Adornment of Virgins: Æthelthryth and Her Necklaces', in *Listen, O Isles, unto Me: Studies in Medieval Word and Image in Honour of Jennifer O'Reilly*, ed. by Elizabeth Mullins and Diarmuid Scully (Cork: Cork University Press, 2011), pp. 142-55 (pp. 143-44).

<sup>414</sup> See for example Burns on Tertullian, *Courtly Love Undressed*, p. 39; and John Maddison on Aldhelm's seventh-century reimagining of this trope, *Ely Cathedral: Design and Meaning* (Ely: Ely Cathedral Publications, 2000), p. 4. The particularly gendered nature of Audrey's ornamentation is emphasised by comparison with Eloi: while Eloi likewise adorns his body with gold and jewels in his early life, he faces no punishment, see *Elois*, 31b-32a.

<sup>415</sup> Blanton, *Signs of Devotion*, p. 46. The sacred potential of Audrey's neck is perhaps heightened in the later Middle Ages through the tradition of selling silk necklaces at Ely as pilgrim souvenirs, see Goscelin of Saint-Bertin, *The Hagiography of the Female Saints of Ely*, ed. and trans. by Rosalind C. Love (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), pp. xlv-xlvii.

<sup>416</sup> *Liber Eliensis*, I. 27, p. 45 ('They showed me also that the wound of the incision which I had made, had been healed, in such a way that instead of the open, gaping wound with which she was buried, there appeared at that time the slightest traces of a scar' (*Liber Eliensis*, trans. by Fairweather, I. 27, p. 60)).

The wound no longer gapes open, but it leaves a scar, a material reminder of the saint's susceptibility to sin in life and a testament to her miraculous post-mortem healing. By inscribing the history of her imperfect flesh onto her body, the scar authenticates Audrey's sainthood, acting as evidence of the divinely sanctioned resealing of her body after death.<sup>417</sup> The fifteenth-century Ely retable discussed above signals the enduring importance of Audrey's scar in her broader iconographic tradition: the assembled nuns point to the scar, drawing the gaze and suggesting the ways in which this bodily mark emblematically identifies the saint and embodies her history (Figure 14a).<sup>418</sup> The scar is a dense corporeal node that visually communicates at once Audrey's materiality and her spiritual perfection.

Marie describes the healed wound in rather different terms from those used in the *Liber*, making no mention of a scar. Instead, Marie articulates the healing in terms of temporal and physical change: the wound is healed ('tute sanee' (2250)), when at Audrey's death it was still open ('A sa mort fu uncore overte' (2252)). Divine power is manifested not by a static material emblem, but by the dynamic process of change that the body undergoes: 'La vertu Deu omnipotent | Fu clere en cel remuelement' (2253-54). The ambiguous term 'remuelement' encompasses the meanings of both 'change, alteration' and 'removal, taking away'.<sup>419</sup> Moreover, *Audree* repeatedly uses 'remuer' and 'remuelement' to refer to the physical *translatio* of saintly bodies (2168, 2211, 2685, 2706-08, 2729-37). What renders God's power over Audrey's body clear to see is at once the transformation of this body from wounded openness to healthy closure, and her body's exposure as the Ely community translates it. The *Liber*'s scar makes visible a clearly defined temporal history, a restored wholeness that follows bodily rupture. By contrast, *Audree*'s revelatory 'remuelement' is temporally dense: like her incorruption more generally, it blurs linear distinctions between past and present, acting as a site of temporal surplus that forges networks across time. It frames the demonstration of Audrey's sainthood as an ongoing moment of transition that encompasses the participation of the community of onlookers at Ely.

Thus in Marie's rendition of Audrey's healing, what is important in the communication of divine *virtus* is less the material evidence of Audrey's body *per se*

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<sup>417</sup> Blanton, *Signs of Devotion*, pp. 42-45.

<sup>418</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>419</sup> *AND*.

than the temporal connections, and networks of communal onlookers, that the body forges. The network around the saint is foregrounded, while the body itself is portrayed as a resistant space of transformation and translation. In Brown's terms, Audrey's wound in this text concentrates the thing-like nature of her body, manifesting temporal and spiritual surplus in the way it exceeds everyday processes of dead, injured flesh. Paradoxically, the fleshy surplus of the wound is also articulated as a fleshy lack, inviting a gaze that it nevertheless resists. The potential translation of 'remuement' as 'removal' signals the way Audrey's wound retreats from the gaze into nothingness, defined by its absence from her body. In *Audree*, the saint's body resists the material inscription of its history of rupture on its surface. Audrey's healed, scar-less body effaces the wound that infringed her bodily boundaries, rendering the saint's physical interiority inaccessible except through narrative. What members of the Ely community see when they look at the body is less the material body itself than the temporal and spiritual networks that it incarnates. Even when it is exposed openly to the gaze, Audrey's unruly body, in its exceptionality, excesses, and latencies, remains resistant, withdrawing from the gaze.

## Potential bodies

This interplay between resistance and surplus, the ways in which the body makes the spiritual and temporal networks it inhabits visible even as it resists the gaze, are dramatized in the relationship between Audrey's corpse and the material artefacts that surround it. Throughout, Marie pays sustained attention to enclosures that interrupt the gaze, hinting at the desirable interior they contain, while withholding sight of this space. As Audrey's unblemished flesh demonstrates, the surface of her body acts as one of these resistant enclosures. This body is in turn contained and concealed within Audrey's tomb: an enclosure that directs and interrupts the gaze of those seeking to look at the body. Audrey is initially buried in a wooden, unadorned coffin (2031-34); however, after her first translation, she is placed into a grander white marble sarcophagus (2179-80). Like Audrey's body, her tomb is an exceptionally active thing. Once her corpse is placed within, the stones of the coffin join seamlessly around her:

Les pierres ensemble se pristrent  
 Et si joinstrent et si asistrent  
 Ke nul ne pooit veir jointure  
 N'ou avoit esté l'overture.

(2279-82)

The material of Audrey's tomb behaves in a similar way to her incorrupt, scar-less flesh, sealing over any openings that might trouble the body's inviolability or provide access to it.<sup>420</sup> This miraculous wholeness conceals the body and makes it more completely inaccessible, while also communicating the body's sacredness. The text describes how the tomb is found miraculously already made to the correct size near the city walls (2183-89), a discovery identified as God's work: 'Distrent ke Deu l'out tramise | Pur la virge ki leenz ert mise' (2191-92). The tomb's resistant surface ensures Audrey's body remains visually and tangibly unavailable, its smoothness communicating only its present state of wholeness. The tomb exists outside human means of production, appearing fully formed: it is a thing without a history. Brown defines both things and objects as temporally situated: things are the 'before and after' of objects.<sup>421</sup> Here, divine intervention produces an artefact situated outside this linear progression of material time. While Audrey's incorrupt body makes visible an extended temporal network, her tomb appears to be sealed off from human temporality and history.

The complexity of the relationship between the tomb and its contents is drawn out by the series of failed attempts to access the tomb after Audrey's translation. *Audree* recounts the violent assault upon Audrey's Ely community during late ninth-century Viking invasions (2425-28). One invader strikes at Audrey's sarcophagus with his axe, piercing a hole in its surface, 'Ou sa hache feri desus, | Si qu'il i fist un grant pertus', although he is swiftly blinded and thereby prevented from accessing the body (2435-36, 2441). Reading this episode in the *Liber Eliensis*, Monika Otter points to the resemblances between enclosing tomb and whole, virgin, female body in order to argue that attempts to violate Audrey's tomb are displaced acts of rape.<sup>422</sup> For Otter, the tomb as material artefact stands for the

<sup>420</sup> Blanton-Whetsell, '*Tota integra, tota incorrupta*', p. 247.

<sup>421</sup> Brown, 'Thing Theory', p. 5.

<sup>422</sup> Monika Otter, 'The Temptation of St. Æthelthryth', *Exemplaria*, 9.1 (1997), 139-63 (pp. 140-41). In particular the Viking's threat of violation might recall the violent threats Audrey faced from her second husband Egfrid in life (1279-86, 1321).

saint's body, the threat to its integrity a sexualised threat to Audrey's bodily wholeness.<sup>423</sup> Situating this attempted infraction within the *Liber*'s twelfth-century monastic context, Virginia Blanton argues that the *Liber* positions Audrey's whole corpse as a metonym for the Ely foundation and its possessions.<sup>424</sup> For the *Liber*'s monastic audience, Audrey's incorrupt corpse figures the Ely community's immutable continuity, and her powerful defence of her body the Ely monks' enduring resistance to external interference, conflating protection of Audrey's body with protection of the monastic community and its property.<sup>425</sup>

Although Marie preserves this episode's substance as it is described in the *Liber*, I suggest that her position as a woman writing outside the interests of the Ely institution reconfigures relationships between body, land, tomb, and (potential) viewing communities.<sup>426</sup> She drastically condenses the account of the Viking depredations, silencing any mention of the male monks of Ely's ninth-century double house as victims of the violence.<sup>427</sup> She does not replicate the *Liber*'s concern for articulating continuity at Ely, instead centring her narrative on the destruction of female community and authority.<sup>428</sup> Her description of the invasion is immediately preceded by an evocation of the enduring female community at Ely: 'Dura [...] | [...] la religion | Des dames ki remises furent' (2407-09). The violence is not only directed at Audrey's entombed body, but also at Ely's landscape, buildings, possessions, and nuns:

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<sup>423</sup> Blanton, *Signs of Devotion*, p. 137; Blanton-Whetsell, '*Tota integra, tota incorrupta*', p. 232.

<sup>424</sup> Blanton-Whetsell, '*Tota integra, tota incorrupta*', p. 233.

<sup>425</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 228; Koopmans, pp. 122-23. On the continuity that possession of Audrey's relics confers on Ely, see Susan J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England: A Study of West Saxon and East Anglian Cults* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 182, 191.

<sup>426</sup> As Wogan-Browne points out, *Audree* is less invested in the landscape of Ely as a monastic property than in the way it provides the saint with refuge from marriage and a means to ensure her virginity, "'Clerc u lai, muïne u dame": Women and Anglo-Norman Hagiography in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries', in *Women and Literature in Britain, 1150-1500*, ed. by Carol M. Meale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 61-85 (p. 66). On the differences introduced by the rewriting of Audrey's life by women, see Wogan-Browne, 'Rerouting the Dower', p. 31.

<sup>427</sup> The *Liber* narrates the Danish invasion over four chapters (I. 38-41, pp. 52-56), *Audree* a few dozen lines (2403-42). Marie omits almost all of Chapters 39-40, which recount the wider invasion of England and destruction of other monasteries (pp. 53-55). The *Liber* records the massacre of Ely brothers and sisters, 'fratres et sorores' (I. 40, p. 55), and the (male) clergy, 'clerus' (I. 41, p. 56).

<sup>428</sup> Indeed, as Wogan-Browne points out, there was no direct link between Audrey's foundation and Ely Abbey as it existed in the twelfth century, 'Rerouting the Dower', p. 30.

L'yle gastirent et maumistrent

Totes ses noneines occistrent.

Le moster ont ars et robbé

Et tot l'avoir ont enporté.

(2425-28)

In other words, Marie emphasises this violence's generalised character and its destruction of the female community. The juxtaposition of Marie's reference to the female community's continuity and her description of its destruction emphasises what has been lost, presenting the invasion as a devastating communal rupture.

Despite the continual presence of Audrey's tomb at Ely, Marie frames the loss of the female religious community in the Viking attacks as the loss of the saint's material, visual body for those within the text.<sup>429</sup> This is affirmed by the Viking's attempt to open Audrey's tomb, which contrasts with the legitimate desire of the Ely community under Seaxburga to approach the saintly body. Like Seaxburga's translation of her sister, the Viking's attempt to expose the body is underpinned by a desire to access a 'tresor' within Audrey's tomb, a treasure that he interprets very differently. The 'seint tresor' that Seaxburga sends the Ely community to see is Audrey's body (2174), a comparison between body and treasure reprised throughout the text (2034, 2180, 2270).<sup>430</sup> Seaxburga's divinely inspired desire, her legitimate gaze, discerns the surplus spiritual meaning of the fleshy treasure the tomb encloses. The Viking, however, searches within for a material treasure of gold or silver: 'Tresor quida trover dedenz | Et ke ceo fust or ou argent' (2433-34). The Viking approaches the tomb's contents as isolated from its surplus bodily and spiritual significance, and fails to perceive this saintly treasure's participation in a sacred network intertwining material artefact, saintly body, and divine *virtus*. Here the visibility and legibility of Audrey's body is embedded within the communal network of onlookers led by Seaxburga. The destruction of the community that sees Audrey's body as treasure also destroys the holy body's visibility. The Viking's inability to see the saintly treasure for what it is reaffirms that loss.

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<sup>429</sup> It is worth noting that although her material body remains concealed within the tomb throughout the text, visionary apparitions do allow the faithful some mediated glimpse at her form. This apparition appears tangible at times: striking sinners (3537-40) and wiping the dust from their faces (3885-87).

<sup>430</sup> A central metaphor for saintly relics, see Herrmann-Mascard, p. 23.

The saint's reaction to the Viking's infraction brings the sacred thing-like qualities of her corpse to the fore, as it defies attempts to be seen. Like Seaxburga's desire to see her sister's bones, the Viking's expectations are at once frustrated and overwhelmed: he finds treasure, but the bodily, spiritual nature of this treasure exceeds his understanding, and he is prevented from glimpsing what resides within the tomb. He is swiftly punished by God, blinded, and condemned to death (2437-42). The visual nature of the Viking's punishment suggests that the violation of the virgin body that Otter identifies in his assault is as much about the unsanctioned exposure of the body as it is a displaced penetration of the tomb. Indeed, writing in the second century, Tertullian claims the display of virgin bodies is itself a sexual violation endangering the virgin's status: 'omnis publicatio virginis bonae, stupri passio est'.<sup>431</sup> The potential exposure of Audrey's body to the Viking's avaricious gaze endangers the virgin wholeness that ensures her incorruption and defines her sanctity. Fittingly, the Viking's illegitimate, dangerous gaze is entirely eliminated before such a violation can occur, as he loses his means of sight (2441). The Viking's punishment thus neutralises him as a viewing subject who might threaten Audrey's body through his perception of it. Here, *virtus* is demonstrated not through the revelation of incorrupt flesh, but through its concealment, as the saint's body remains invisible.<sup>432</sup> Sainthood is suggested by Audrey's continued containment within the enclosing tomb, rather than by the tangibility of her body. The body's absence from sight is thus meaningful and productive: the corpse's resistance to exposure asserts divine presence. Significantly, the miracle is performed not by Audrey, but by God: 'Pur la merite seinte Audree | I a sa puissance moustree' (2439-40). Rather than a tangible, perceivable presence, the saint's body is an empty space in a network of sacred power that links the material fabric of her tomb with the divine. The fact that the miracle is performed in Audrey's name, rather than by the saint herself, renders the relationship of her concealed body to God all

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<sup>431</sup> Tertullian, *Liber de virginibus velandis*, *Patrologia Latina*, 2 (1844), cols 887-914 (Chapter III, col. 892). Robert Mills cites this passage, and translates it as 'every public exposure of an honourable virgin is a suffering of rape', 'Can the Virgin Martyr Speak?', in *Medieval Virginites*, ed. by Bernau, Evans, and Salih, pp. 187-213 (p. 187).

<sup>432</sup> Both Camp and Miller, in their analyses of the relic as thing, tend to neglect the relic's potential latencies in favour of its excessive qualities: the example of Audrey is an important corrective to this neglect. See Camp, 'The Temporal Excesses of Dead Flesh', pp. 417-19; Miller, *The Corporeal Imagination*, p. 62.



the more apparent. The perception of sacredness involves a particular kind of absence that produces as much as it withdraws.

The withdrawal of Audrey's body focuses attention not only on her connections to the divine, but also on the ways her tomb materially manifests her sainthood. The connections between Audrey's saintly body and her tomb are suggested particularly forcefully through the 'pertus' the Viking's axe blow carves into the stone tomb. The 'pertus' ruptures the tomb's miraculous wholeness, calling attention to the tomb's nature as a container whose interior is potentially accessible, if perpetually withheld. The 'pertus' in the tomb surface echoes Audrey's neck wound, as a breach that embodies latent potential for exposure and rupture. As I explore above, the wound on Audrey's neck is precisely about reclaiming this evidence of possible rupture as evidence of spiritual value through the miraculous enforcement of wholeness. Similarly, the wound on the tomb crystallises how the tomb's potential breach in fact demonstrates Audrey's sacred inviolability and invisibility: it testifies that the threat of exposure has been divinely averted.

Moreover, the breach connects different moments in time, interweaving the Viking's attempt at violating the tomb with a later, similarly thwarted, incursion by a doubting priest. The opening remains on the tomb, *Audree* recounts, until at least the tenth century (2429-60). The text's description of the opening's survival prompts a repetition of the narrative of the Viking's attack (2523-25). When a negligent monastic community repopulates Ely, a priest among them calls into question the presence of Audrey's body (2455-56), resolving to verify or disprove her continued preservation (2519-56). In other words, while Seaxburga and her community approach Audrey's body as already a site of spiritual value, even before they have visual verification of her incorruption, the priest inverts these terms: his faith in Audrey's sanctity *requires* physical, visible proof. Like the Viking, the access he seeks to Audrey's body is inappropriate – and punishable – because he fails to understand its spiritual value. The 'pertus' repeatedly forms the focus of the priest's attempted infringement. The priest approaches the opening with a candle, attempting unsuccessfully to see inside the tomb:

Al pertuis de la tombe vint.

De cel saint cors voleit savoir,

Mes il n'en pout mie veoir.

(2558-60)

He inserts an iron hook ('un croket') through the 'pertuis' to catch onto and extract Audrey's clothes: 'Il voleit traire les dras hors' (2573-77). The continued presence of an opening in the sealed tomb encourages further attempts to view the body, holding forth the potential that the body may be glimpsed or physically accessed.<sup>433</sup> Again, however, the saint's body resists the desire for visibility or tangibility: the priest cannot see the body inside the tomb (2560), and he and his companions are severely punished (2598-2626). As in the earlier episode when the damage was originally inflicted on the tomb, the 'pertus' condenses the unrealised potential of the tomb to be opened, the body to be seen.

While the spectacle of the body is withheld, this episode nevertheless raises the possibility that an encounter with the saint's body might take place. Feeling the priest's tug on her clothing as he attempts to extract it, Audrey pulls it out of his grasp, and admonishes him:

Puis ke seinte Audree senti  
 Ke l'em hostoit ses dras de li,  
 [...]  
 A sey les trait et resembla  
 [...]  
 Et parla la virge dedenz  
 Si que bien oïerent les genz  
 (2585-92)

Whereas God punishes the Viking, here the saint herself is the agent of retribution. Unlike the Viking episode, in which the body manifests divine power through its continued absence and passivity, here Audrey's unseen body asserts her presence through lively activity. Audrey's protection of her invisibility is the guarantor of her bodily and holy presence. The fact that the body might be but is never seen renders its presence in these later iterations more powerful than if it were openly displayed. The incorrupt relic's power to convey meaning and facilitate intercession lies in the interplay between its physical intangibility and (always unrealised) potential to be seen or grasped.<sup>434</sup> The desired visual encounter with the saint is replaced by a more

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<sup>433</sup> Otter, pp. 141, 161.

<sup>434</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 141. Even when order is restored to the Ely community after the invasion and the neglect of the doubting clergy, Audrey's body remains unseen. The text recounts the saint's 1106 translation into the new church. Despite the grandeur of the affair, the monks do not even attempt to look inside the coffin. Audrey's body remains out of sight, its sanctity

indirect, multisensory encounter (her clothes' movement, her voice) that suggests the body's presence without its exposure. The body's withdrawal – and the prolongation of its absence from view in the face of repeated attacks – communicates Audrey's holiness in a way that a more direct tangible, visual encounter with her body would not.

Indeed, as Audrey's body is repeatedly withheld from view within enclosing structures that efface visual proof of her presence, her sacred *virtus* magnifies, exceeding the confines of her corporeal form to infuse material artefacts with sacred power and meaning. In the passage cited above, the body is defined by its enclosure within the tomb's interior ('la virge dedenz'), but also within the intermediate layers of clothing that Audrey gathers to her ('A sey les trait et ressembla'). Marie's work paints Audrey as more thoroughly whole and enclosed than the *Liber*, where the priest is able to cut off a fragment of Audrey's clothes before she resists him.<sup>435</sup> In *Audree*, saintly body and clothing are a unit that resists any attempt at extraction beyond the enclosing tomb (withstanding efforts to 'traire les dras hors' and 'host[er] ses dras'). Audrey's body is asserted not through its tangible presence, but through its more intangible attributes (Audrey's voice) and through the artefacts that encase it (the saint's clothes and tomb). The artefacts that surround the saint's physical remains form a network that communicates and defines both spiritual and bodily presence. A collective of bodily substitutes accumulates around the space that Audrey's body occupies, a body that they continue to signify, even as it retreats.<sup>436</sup>

I have argued that, after the destruction of the familial, female community that Audrey establishes at Ely, the saint's body recedes into resistant invisibility, refusing to be seen. This absence is powerful and meaningful, signifying Audrey's saintly presence. In the illegitimate attempts to view Audrey's corpse mentioned above, the body refuses to be disentangled from the conglomerate of elements that surrounds it. In Brown's terms, Audrey's body refuses to surrender its status as a

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displayed through another displaced miracle, as a knocked over candle ignites a fire that fails to harm the body, the body's holiness again demonstrated without the need for visual interface with the flesh itself (2717-22).

<sup>435</sup> '[Vestes] ad foramen usque pertraxit et, quia nullam lesionem habebant, mirari cepit. Qui confestim ingentem macheram aripuit et exiguam exinde particulam [...] incidit' (*Liber Eliensis*, I. 49, pp. 60-61). 'He pulled it [the stick] right to the hole and through; and he began to marvel because the grave-clothes were undamaged. In haste, he snatched up a massive dagger and [...] cut from it a tiny little piece' (*Liber Eliensis*, trans. by Fairweather, I. 49, p. 81).

<sup>436</sup> Blanton-Whetsell, '*Tota integra, tota incorrupta*', p. 230.

confusing, unknowable thing in order to become a visible, graspable object. The saint's body retreats into more obscure thinghood in these later passages, continuing to signify but becoming increasingly inaccessible to human eyes and touch. For those who seek to look at the body, it is perceptible only via the (potentially permeable) boundaries that enclose it. With the loss of the community in which Audrey was entwined, the body is no longer embedded in a network of people that renders it comprehensible; rather, it signifies through networks of artefacts that resist direct human contact.

Audrey's body-as-thing is thus most powerfully encountered through indirect contact with its associated artefacts. The desiring gaze of those who approach Audrey is redirected towards a network of entities that surround her – the pierced but impenetrable tomb surface, her incorrupt clothing, and indeed to other bodies. During Audrey's twelfth-century translation (in which the sight of her own body is avoided (2709-21)), the corpse of her saintly great-niece Withburga is accidentally exposed when her coffin breaks open (2741-70). Withburga's corpse performs a displaced incorruptibility that obviates the need to expose Audrey's own body.<sup>437</sup> Those seeking healing from Audrey are cured through material substitutes that stand in for the body: the touch of her preserved clothing (2311-12) or her tomb (2485-86). Supplicants are cured of headaches by inserting their heads into Audrey's wooden coffin, left empty after her translation (2321-28).<sup>438</sup> Audrey's chemise is laid over the body of a sick child (3799-3816). As contact relics, the empty coffin and unworn chemise signify both the erstwhile presence of the sacred body and its withdrawal, its present status as absent referent mediated by material substitutes.<sup>439</sup> The withdrawal of Audrey's body leaves a tangible emptiness in networks linking the divine and the material world. The networks of surplus artefacts that accumulate around Audrey do not simply replace the body, but engage with its emptiness, positioning the spaces Audrey leaves as productive sites of miracle generation.

The ways in which artefacts can make the saint present even in her bodily absence is particularly important for Marie and her later readers in Campsey Priory, who – unlike the *Liber's* monastic audience – did not live in proximity to Audrey's shrine, and thus accessed her body principally through the mediation of text and

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<sup>437</sup> Blanton, *Signs of Devotion*, p. 134.

<sup>438</sup> The use of empty tombs as contact relics was commonplace, see Dierkens, pp. 248-49.

<sup>439</sup> On contact relics, see Bartlett, p. 239; Herrmann-Mascard, p. 45.

manuscript. In particular, the readers of the Campsey manuscript are presented with a visual representation of the saintly body. A number of the Campsey texts are illustrated with a portrait of the saint they recount – of these, Audrey’s is the most visually complex (Figure 15), the saint accompanied by a variety of emblems that communicate important aspects of her sanctity (compare to Edward’s simpler portrait (Figure 16)). The image concisely associates Audrey’s body with the landscape and institution of Ely, while commenting on the enclosed, inviolate nature of this body. The saint stands on a rocky outcrop (or perhaps rises from a wave of water), recalling the protective landscape of Ely, as well as her flight from Egfrid and the miraculous protection from violation afforded by the rising sea (1319-54).<sup>440</sup> She gestures towards a miniature church that she holds in her hand, suggesting her authority as monastic founder, but also reinforcing the bodily protection, isolation, and enclosure offered by the space of Ely.<sup>441</sup> The image’s multifaceted focus on enclosure is heightened by the fact it forms part of an initial letter ‘A’, which additionally encircles Audrey’s body. The initial presents the viewer with a series of boundaries – geographical, ecclesiastical, and textual – that enclose and protect the saint’s body. Even as the body is represented, this representation is inflected with implications of concealment and withdrawal from the gaze. This formal enclosure is not totalising: the land on which Audrey stands interrupts and spills over the initial’s formal borders. Like Audrey’s wounded body and perforated tomb, the enclosure of this letter form enfolds the potential for rupture. Indeed, this comparison between Audrey’s wounded body (whose potential for rupture is inscribed on her skin) and this image’s complex interplay of enclosure and interruption is potentially reinforced by the very nature of the illumination as painted on the (animal) skin surface of the manuscript’s parchment. In both cases the viewer’s attention is directed to ambiguous marks on a different kind of bodily surface that encourage reflection on the potential breaching of a range of (bodily, spatial, textual) boundaries.<sup>442</sup>

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<sup>440</sup> Campbell, *Medieval Saints’ Lives*, pp. 201-02.

<sup>441</sup> Blanton, *Signs of Devotion*, p. 190. On the associations between saintly body and Ely landscape and possessions, see Blanton-Whetsell, ‘*Tota integra, tota incorrupta*’, p. 231; Wogan-Browne, ‘Rerouting the Dower’, p. 36.

<sup>442</sup> See Kay, ‘Original Skin’, p. 37.



Figure 15. Audrey of Ely, 1275-1300, gold leaf and ink on parchment, London, British Library, MS Additional 70513, fol. 100<sup>v</sup>.



Figure 16. Edward the Confessor, 1275-1300, gold leaf and ink on parchment, London, British Library, MS Additional 70513, fol. 55<sup>v</sup>.

The body this image presents to the reader is whole and living – like the text itself, the image makes present to the viewer a body that is inaccessible to her in reality. As its evocation of Audrey's miraculous protection from Egfrid demonstrates, although the illumination is not strictly narrative, it gestures towards multiple moments across her life.<sup>443</sup> Once again encouraging comparison with

<sup>443</sup> Campbell, *Medieval Saints' Lives*, p. 201.

Audrey's wound or her tomb's 'pertus', the initial is temporally dense, condensing a broad network of narrative, temporal, and spatial associations into a single point of reference. The imbrication of Audrey's body with the artefacts that surround her is emphasised by the lectern with an open book on the right of the initial. The open book potentially recalls a variety of textual moments, evoking Audrey as reader of saints' lives (1611-14) and instructor of others in spiritual matters (1250-52).<sup>444</sup> Moreover, what Audrey reads from the illustrated page before her is the single word 'amen', which commonly denotes the end not only of prayers, but of hagiographic texts, which often close with a direct appeal to God. Seven of the Campsey lives end on this invocation, although *Audree* does not, closing instead with Marie's plea that she be remembered (4624-25).<sup>445</sup> This absence of conventional ending potentially points to a lack of narrative closure. Indeed, the final line has no matching rhyming couplet, gesturing towards textual incompleteness or abrupt interruption.<sup>446</sup> Closure (the textual 'amen') is displaced from the text of *Audree* onto the illustrated Audrey's reading material, that is from the text's ending to the initial that opens it. The inscription of 'amen' on Audrey's book interweaves text, illustration, and manuscript, perhaps suggesting that the saint reads the displaced ending of her own life as told by Marie.<sup>447</sup> The suggestive nature of this word choice encapsulates the image's complex temporality – it folds ending and beginning into one moment, suggesting a sacred time with no defined end point, situating Audrey's body both

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<sup>444</sup> Campbell suggests the ways the saint's position as reader and instructor might imagine communal relationships beyond the text. It encourages potential parallels between the saint and both the female author source of authority and instruction, and the female readers of the manuscript who read the text out loud to their community (as the manuscript indicates, it was used for communal mealtime reading). Reading is a means of a gendered *imitatio* of the saint, extending her presence and allowing the community of readers access to it through both text and manuscript. *Ibid.*, pp. 201-02.

<sup>445</sup> The lives in question are: Nicole Bozon's lives of Elizabeth of Hungary ('Ke vers Deu nous seit en socour. Amen.' (414)) and Paul the Hermit ('De tele vie ke est loynteyn. Amen.' (300)); Guillaume le Clerc de Normandie's life of Mary Magdalene ('Et loer le Rei de Victorie. Amen.' (724)); Matthew Paris's life of Edmund of Canterbury ('En tuz tens en gloire, amen.' (2020)); the anonymous life of Osith ('Ke maint uns Deus en trinité. Amen.' (1695)); Simon of Walsingham's *Foy* ('Amen, amen, trestuz dium!' (1242)); Clemence of Barking's life of Catherine of Alexandria ('Et puis en bon[e] fin finir. Amen.' (2688)).

<sup>446</sup> Rossi suggests this interruption may have been pragmatic, as the Campsey redactions of *Edouard* and the life of Catherine are also missing final passages that identify their composition with Barking, an institutional alignment she proposes may have been obsolete by the time of the manuscript's compilation, pp. 160-61.

<sup>447</sup> Blanton notes the potential connection between Audrey's reading material, Marie's text, and the Campsey manuscript, although not its relationship to closure, *Signs of Devotion*, p. 19.

within and outside the narrative's intradiegetic temporality. The Campsey manuscript's readership, through the encounter with this assemblage of text and image, is granted access to the sacred time of Audrey's saintly body. It suggests the ways in which the reader might enter into proximity with the saint's body through a shared moment of sacred reading outside the linear passage of time.

The open book suggests the ways in which the manuscript that contains *Audree* in particular might participate in the network of objects that conveys Audrey's excessive, overflowing body. As Campbell points out, the proximity of the book to representations of Audrey's inviolate body and enclosing landscape hints at the ways her sanctity is transmitted to the material artefacts around her, including the book.<sup>448</sup> The predominant use of white paint and black line work to colour Audrey's flesh and clothing, the church, and the book emphasises the potential confluences between body, building, artefact, and manuscript, recalling the ways in which Audrey's sacred qualities overflow her corporeal boundaries and encompass the material objects surrounding her. The manuscript image and the book that contains it are drawn into this network of enclosing material objects that make the absent body present. If Audrey's incorrupt body emerges throughout the text as a thing that productively disrupts through its excesses and its latency, as well as through its engagement in material and spiritual networks, then the text and manuscript that record her life participate in these same networks, while also sharing in the saintly body's thing-like qualities of active, networked excess. By rendering Audrey's sacred thing-like body visible to the reader, *Audree's* manuscript asserts its own potential capacity to embody the saint.

### **Edward: seeing and not seeing**

Immediately following Edward the Confessor's death, and despite the draining illness he had suffered, the saintly king's fleshly complexion appeared miraculously reinvigorated, 'En sa culur reviguré' (5241).<sup>449</sup> The nun of Barking, like Marie,

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<sup>448</sup> Campbell, *Medieval Saints' Lives*, p. 202.

<sup>449</sup> This passage, along with all accounts of Edward's death and posthumous activities, are only witnessed in the Vatican *Edouard* manuscript (Rome, Vatican, MS Reg. Lat. 489). The Campsey redaction ends before the saint's death, at line 4240.



describes the saintly body as an incorrupt corpse that confounds onlookers' expectations of how an ordinary corpse 'works'. Edward's reinvigorated corpse provokes emotional responses in those who see it: the gathered crowd are 'esmerveillé' and 'lié' (5242-43). On a basic level, then, Edward's corpse shares in what I have described as the sacred thing-like qualities of Audrey's body: a productive disruption of expectations for material bodies and an unruly fleshy surplus that troubles temporal distinctions between life and death. While Audrey's body is characterised by its withdrawal from the gaze and its implication in networks of nonhuman artefacts, *Edouard*, I will argue, explores how the corpse is fixed with a desiring gaze, while nonetheless escaping the capacities of that gaze.

The sight of Edward's body immediately after his death emphasises its accessibility and comprehensibility in familiar hagiographic terms. The reinvigorated body, although shocking to the senses, is openly revealed to the gaze. The body thus becomes an intelligible locus of abundant spiritual meaning that denotes divine networks linking the saintly body to God: 'De la culur unt entendu | Qu'ele vint de la Deu vertu' (5246-47).<sup>450</sup> The nun positions Edward's body as visually communicative. The act of revealing the body underpins the understanding of the sacred connections the saint embodies: 'Puis unt cel saint cors descouvert, | De la verté Deu se funt cert' (5238-39). The couplet 'descouvert'-'cert' cements the connection between certain veracity and bodily revelation. Here, as for much of the Middle Ages, sight is the means of acquiring knowledge: for the divine to be perceived, the body must be seen.<sup>451</sup>

Edward's incorruption is bound up with his bodily chastity during his lifetime: 'La chasté k'el cors li maneit, | Par deors mustrer se vuleit' (5248-49). Edward's exposed flesh is a vehicle for God to make the saint's chastity externally visible. Edward's chastity is characterised by a complex interplay between enclosure and surface visibility that both echoes and contrasts with the depiction of Audrey's virgin body. Both Audrey and Edward are defined by their sexual abstinence and preservation of chastity in marriage. However, the presentation of this abstinence is clearly inflected by gender: *Edouard* deploys a vocabulary of chastity more characteristic of male saints, rather than the lexis of virginity used for female saints

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<sup>450</sup> On the well-established connections between incorruption and sainthood, see Vauchez, pp. 499-500.

<sup>451</sup> Akbari, p. 3; Biernoff, p. 17.

like Audrey.<sup>452</sup> Despite this lexical distinction, Edward's chaste body is also described using metaphors of threatened enclosure that recall *Audree's* treatment of female virgin bodies.<sup>453</sup> While Audrey is an unviolated 'temple', the nun's description of Edward's anxieties about marriage presents his body as a frail vessel that holds the sacred:

Duta que, s'il femme espusast,  
 Ke cel tresor [de chastée] ne lui emblast,  
 Kar en fieble vassel esteit  
 Et de poi tost depescereit.  
 Cest vessel est le cors humain  
 (1105-09)

The human body is a container for the sacred treasure of chastity, a container under threat of rupture and the loss of its holy contents.<sup>454</sup> The vocabulary of containment and treasure recalls the terminology of the reliquary. Indeed elsewhere in the text, the nun uses 'vaissel' to describe a container for relics (3065), reinforcing the connection between Edward's chaste body and his afterlife as a relic. Edward's chastity is an internal quality whose preservation relies on the maintenance of the body's containment. Yet the image of the body as a container housing the treasure of chastity complicates questions of interiority and external display.<sup>455</sup> The lexical link to the reliquary blurs distinctions between the sanctity of container and contained, the saint's human flesh and the artefact that encloses it, reminding the reader that Edward's corpse will itself become the enclosed treasure, his body both container

<sup>452</sup> This gendered terminology of virginity and chastity corresponds to widespread saintly models in this period, Cullum, p. 228.

<sup>453</sup> Elliott suggests that virgin kings like Edward appropriate patterns of female sanctity, p. 128. Wogan-Browne discusses the parallel pressures faced by female virgin saints and Edward as king to marry and produce heirs, "'Clerc u lai, muïne u dame'", pp. 71-72. On how male virgin saints resist gender divides and trouble gender roles, see Campbell, *Medieval Saints' Lives*, pp. 452-53, 456.

<sup>454</sup> On the development of the vulnerability of Edward's virginity in his hagiographic tradition, see Joanna Huntingdon, 'Edward the Celibate, Edward the Saint: Virginity in the Construction of Edward the Confessor', in *Medieval Virginites*, ed. by Bernau, Evans, and Salih, pp. 119-39. On the metaphor of the body as vessel more broadly see Atkinson, "'Precious Balsam in a Fragile Glass'", p. 136; Hahn discusses the biblical roots of the image in 2 Corinthians 4. 7 'habemus autem thesaurum istum in vasis fictilibus ut sublimitas sit virtutis Dei et non ex nobis' ('But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us'), *Strange Beauty*, pp. 57-58.

<sup>455</sup> Chastity is painted throughout *Edouard* as a sacred treasure to be hoarded (see also 323-24, 941).

and contained.<sup>456</sup> As Edward's posthumous rejuvenation suggests, whereas Audrey withholds her bodily interiority, God offers Edward's up on the surface of the saint's flesh.

Indeed, while *Audree* focuses on the withdrawal of the saint's body from sight, the nun's account of Edward's translation narrates the transition of Edward's corpse from invisibility to visibility, from being inaccessible to being a source of concrete knowledge about the saint. *Edouard* recounts how, fifty years after his death, Edward's bodily concealment within his tomb stirs 'amiable estreif' among the Westminster monks, who have a 'grant desir' to know whether it remains incorrupt (5956-57). The concealed body exists in a state of indeterminacy, unseen and unknown, a site of uncertainty provoking debate and questioning. While Audrey's bodily inaccessibility is a source of saintly power, for Edward it appears a source of anxiety. Although some monks argue that even if Edward's body had decomposed to dust this would not impede his sanctity (5974-75), others worry that the loss of bodily wholeness would reduce the veneration paid to him by a populace who rely on physical integrity as a guarantee of his sainthood (5967-83). Theologically speaking, bodily wholeness was not a prerequisite to sainthood, yet it was often imagined so in practice.<sup>457</sup> Moreover, while in theory the relic fragment is as valuable as the whole body, metonymically making the whole saint present, medieval relic practice demonstrates there was a concurrent anxiety over bodily fragmentation, and a persistent prizing of whole body relics over smaller partitions.<sup>458</sup> Edward's unopened tomb is consequently a site of unstable meaning, housing a corpse that may be either whole or fragmented, either a proof of his sanctity or a detraction from it. This uncertainty is what motivates the monks' desire to expose Edward's body and resolve the question of its intactness. *Edouard* presents Abbot Gilbert Crispin's decision to inspect the body as a manoeuvre to settle this debate and verify the body's condition: 'sun cors revisder | E les estrivanz acerter' (5990-91). In Brown's terms, the monks yearn to translate the saint's body from an inaccessible, unfathomable, unstable thing into a fixed and known object that can be integrated into their conceptions of sainthood.

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<sup>456</sup> This recalls the discussion around the term 'tresor' in Chapter One, p. 96. On the intermingling of container and contained in medieval depictions of reliquaries, see Chaganti, p. 15; Dierkens, p. 240.

<sup>457</sup> Bartlett, pp. 100-02.

<sup>458</sup> Bynum, *Christian Materiality*, pp. 180-93; Malo, pp. 39-40.

The interplay between wholeness and fragmentation that motivates the opening of Edward's tomb is also explored in *Edouard's* reflections on what it means to desire contact with Edward's body. Edward does not seem to police contact with his corpse to the same extent as Audrey. The gathered crowd see the proof of bodily incorruption they desire. They discover a lifelike body: Edward's limbs are flexible, his skin is rosy, and his beard is as firmly attached as when he was alive (6012-19, 6031-37). Yet this experience of the body does not satiate the onlookers' desire for intimate access to Edward. Gundulf, Bishop of Rochester and saint in his own right, seeks to extract and keep a hair from Edward's beard (6041), a gesture that would inflict on the incorrupt body the fragmentation it resists. Unsatisfied with a momentary encounter of Edward's body, Gundulf seeks to prolong his experience of this body. Gundulf's desire to partition Edward's corpse attempts to reduce the body to an object that he can collect ('amasse' (6055)) and hold in his possession ('[s]a poësté' (6057)). Gundulf's desire to possess and collect parts of the saintly body reflects medieval tendencies to treat relics as fragmentable objects of ownership and exchange – tendencies that were regarded as legitimate.<sup>459</sup> Indeed, in the previous chapter I examined Eloi's collection of bodily fragments (including strands of hair) from Quentin's incorrupt corpse as a divinely sanctioned fragmentation that enhanced both participants' sanctity.<sup>460</sup> The desire to extract a portion of the saint's corpse treats the body as an assemblage of potential fragments that can be detached and circulated through networks of possession, while continuing to forge connections to the saintly body from which they have been removed.

Despite the potential legitimacy of Gundulf's desire to collect a bodily fragment, Edward's corpse resists any attempts at partition and possession. His hair cannot be pulled from his face (6042-43); his corpse's lively integrity refuses fragmentation, maintaining its saintly wholeness.<sup>461</sup> Indeed fragmentation is articulated as an active harming of the body, as Gundulf renounces any actions that will damage the corpse ('Ne li ferai riens que li gret' (6059)). Just as Audrey's inviolate, enclosed body must be continuously policed, so here Edward's wholeness and freedom from disintegration is under threat, and must be actively upheld. While

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<sup>459</sup> On the legitimate circulation of relics without any damage to bodily integrity or miraculous *virtus*, see Freeman, *Holy Bones, Holy Dust*, pp. 73-75; Lobrichon, p. 104.

<sup>460</sup> Chapter One, pp. 76-81.

<sup>461</sup> Gundulf must content himself with the mediated fragment of a cloth that had once wrapped the body: 'Mais cel drap ad retenu | Dunt sun cors envelopé fu' (6060-61).

Edward does not punish those who seek to view his body, granting them this sight, his corpse resists Gundulf's attempted partition through lively resistance. This resistance determines the sort of networks in which the body will and will not circulate. If Edward's corpse might be considered an assemblage of body parts, it is an assemblage whose constituent elements cannot be disengaged from one another. The body refuses to participate in networks of exchange and personal possession that would transport it outside its Westminster tomb. In death, Edward's body thus affirms his ongoing, inalienable loyalty to the institution he founded, asserting continuity with Edward's living personhood.<sup>462</sup> Indeed, in its life-like, undead integrity, the corpse figures enduring spatial and temporal stasis: when Gundulf abandons his attempt, he exclaims 'Or gise entier e entier lieft' (6058). Gundulf commits to Edward's present and perpetual wholeness, affirming that the saint will remain whole until he rises at the Resurrection.<sup>463</sup> Edward's corpse insists upon the integrity of its constituent material elements, as well as their connection to the surrounds of its Westminster tomb.

In *Edouard* the meaning of Edward's relics and the response they provoke in onlookers is governed by their nature as a whole, human body. The nun's account of Edward's translation draws out the ways in which the saint provokes a desire centred specifically on the corpse as a body. Her description reveals an intense focus on the corpse's physicality, recounting the tactile encounter between the examiners and the saint. Edward's body parts are enumerated piece by piece as the examiners display and manipulate them: his 'bels braz' are lifted, stretched, and bent (6012-13), his fingers extended and folded (6014), his 'piz' and his entire 'cors' are touched (6015). Even as the body's exposure displays its whole incorruption to the monks' gaze and touch, the nun's text verbally submits the body to the fragmentation that the corpse materially resists. *Edouard* encourages the reader to linger on each individual part of the saint's body in turn, presenting Edward's corpse as a collection of assembled bodily fragments rather than a unified whole.

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<sup>462</sup> On the relationship between Edward and Westminster, see Barlow, *Edward the Confessor*, pp. 230, 265.

<sup>463</sup> For the biblical precedent of the relationship between incorruption and the Resurrection, see I Corinthians 15. 52 'in momento in ictu oculi in novissima tuba canet enim et mortui resurgent incorrupti et nos inmutabimur' ('In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed').

This textual fragmentation not only provides the reader with intimate access to Edward's saintly body, but also reinforces the sense that this body might trouble gender (and genre) binaries. The enumeration of saintly body parts recalls the textual conventions used to describe the bodies of the heroines of courtly romance, descriptions that 'fragment the lady's body into isolated and desirable erotic parts under an admiring male gaze'.<sup>464</sup> The intertextual resonances between vernacular hagiography and romance are well attested – indeed, MacBain's study of the nun's precocious adoption of the term *fin' amor* to describe divine love suggests her exposure to secular literary currents.<sup>465</sup> Comparison with Aelred's *Vita* demonstrates how the nun's vernacular translation draws out the potentially erotic undertones of encounters with Edward's body in a way that is not reflected in her source:

Producunt brachia, plicant digitos, articulos explorant [...] Inuestigant postremo carnis integritatem pariter et colorem, quae, uitro purior, niue candidior, futurae resurrectionis gloriam praeferibat.<sup>466</sup>

In contrast to the Latin's more prosaic description, the nun repeatedly adds the qualifier 'bel', foregrounding the saintly corpse's visual beauty, directing the gaze not only to Edward's pliable arms and fingers ('brachia', 'digitos'), but to his 'bels braz' (6012), 'bele face' (6021), and the beauty of his body and flesh (6017-18). While for Aelred the saint's flesh is whiter than snow, purer than glass, for the nun it is flushed and lively as well as beautifully pale: 'Sa char esteit e blanche e bele, | Culuree od ruwur nuuele' (6018-19). Once again, the nun's description of the saint's flesh recalls the refined appearances of male and female romance protagonists alike.<sup>467</sup> Aelred situates Edward's fleshy integrity as of primarily spiritual

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<sup>464</sup> Burns, *Courtly Love Undressed*, p. 10.

<sup>465</sup> William MacBain, 'Some Religious and Secular Uses of the Vocabulary of *Fin' Amor* in the Early Decades of the Northern French Narrative Poem', *French Forum*, 13.3 (1988), 261-76 (p. 270). On hagiographic and romance intertextuality, see Cazelles, *The Lady as Saint*, pp. 17-18, 31. This generic intertwining was not limited to the French vernacular, see Diana T. Childress, 'Between Romance and Legend: "Secular Hagiography" in Middle English Literature', *Philological Quarterly*, 57.3 (1978), 311-22 (p. 311).

<sup>466</sup> Aelred, *Opera omnia VII*, Chapter 37, ll. 31-35, p. 170; translated by Freeland as 'They stretched out his arms, they bent his fingers, they felt his joints [...] Last of all they tested the integrity and color of his flesh; purer than glass and whiter than snow, it anticipated the glory of the future resurrection' (Aelred, *The Historical Works*, p. 227).

<sup>467</sup> For an early Anglo-Norman example of this sort of lingering, fragmentary bodily description, see Marie de France's depiction of the eponymous hero's fairy lover in *Lanval*:

Le cors ot gent, basse la hanche,  
Le col plus blanc que neif sur branche;  
Les uiz ot vairs e blanc le vis,

significance, signalling the glories of the Resurrection. The nun replaces biblical judgement with an expression of how Edward's revived flesh prompts a desire to see more of his physical beauty: 'Ço enaspriest mult lur vuleir | De sa bele face veer' (6020-21). *Edouard* presents the saintly body not only as a desirable object to be seen and possessed, but also as the beautiful object of a desire that blurs the spiritual and the erotic.

This connection between erotic and spiritual desire is not unique to *Edouard*. The uncovering of the saintly body frequently enfolds the erotic into a desire to see the sacred. As Cary Howie writes, 'Hagiography's desire to make visible always edges up against the vision of desire'.<sup>468</sup> The interweaving of saintly visibility and desire can be found throughout hagiography – particularly in the lives of female virgin martyrs. Brigitte Cazelles argues that the visibility of the bodies of both saintly and courtly heroines is central to constructions of their femininity, a visibility that virgin martyrs seek to resist through their rejection of marriage and sexuality, but are ultimately forced to accept as part of their martyrdom.<sup>469</sup> Passion narratives dwell on the exposure and fragmentation of beautiful flesh, potentially blurring the terminology of erotic and spiritual desire.<sup>470</sup> The descriptive fragmentation of Edward's corpse hints at the ways in which recourse to the imagery of martyrdom is a useful tool to shore up the claims to sainthood of confessor saints.<sup>471</sup> Although studies of the erotics of saintly bodies often presume a heterosexual, voyeuristic relationship between the desirable, objectified, female saintly body, and an implied male viewer/reader, the portrayal of Edward's body complicates this relationship.<sup>472</sup> Edward's body is exposed and fragmented under the touch of the monks who handle

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Bele buche, nes bien asis,  
 Les surcilz bruns e bel le frunt  
 E le chief cresp e alkes blunt  
 (*Lanval*, 569-74, in *Lais de Marie de France*, ed. by Wamke).

<sup>468</sup> Howie, p. 318.

<sup>469</sup> Cazelles, *The Lady as Saint*, pp. 44, 50, 52, 57.

<sup>470</sup> See for example the martyrdom of Saint Foy within the Campsey collection, in which the saint's naked body is stretched out before the gaze of her pagan torturers:

La pucele tute nue  
 Fu sur cel lit estendue;  
 Ses tendre membres estenderent  
 (*Foy*, 387-89).

<sup>471</sup> Indeed, the later *Estoire* makes explicit the connection between Edward's bodily purity and martyrdom, figuring his chastity as rendering him a martyr: 'Par veintre charnel desir | Bein deit ester clamez martir' (1255-56).

<sup>472</sup> For examples of this binary reading, see Gaunt, p. 197; Gravdal, p. 24.

his corpse and the gaze of the female author. Moreover, the exposure of Edward's body as a potentially eroticised object of a desiring female gaze reinserts Edward into a matrix of desire that his chastity resists.<sup>473</sup>

This visual troubling of Edward's bodily integrity may be seen in terms of the medieval association of sight with desire (both carnal and spiritual), an association that threads throughout *Edouard*.<sup>474</sup> While Aelred opens his *Vita* by demonstrating Edward's emulation of biblical models of holiness, *Edouard*'s opening passages reflect on the desire of heavenly angels to look upon God's presence:<sup>475</sup>

De la presence au creatur,  
 La quele li angle desirent  
 Et nepurquant sanz fin le mirent.  
 Tant lur delite l'esgarder  
 Que ne se poënt saüler.  
 Faire desirent ceo qu'il funt  
 Et ceo desirent k'il plus unt.  
 Cum plus le veient, plus i tirent,  
 Cum plus en unt, plus en desirent.  
 De lur poër lur desir lur naist,  
 Et lur poër lur desit prist.  
 Il unt de l'esgarder poër  
 Et de l'enguard naist lur voler.  
 (26-38)

This passage is saturated with the vocabulary of vision, desire, and abundance.<sup>476</sup> A visual encounter with the divine is not only desired, but, once attained, leads only to a greater yearning to see more. Just as Seaxburga's desire to look upon Audrey's

<sup>473</sup> Although the Campsey version of *Edouard* does not preserve the account of Edward's translation, it does allow its audience of women access to this body visually, as Edward is one of the saints depicted in an inhabited initial at the opening of his life, although unlike the image of Audrey in the same collection, the king's body is presented rather simply (Figure 16). One arm raised, Edward is crowned and holds a sceptre, the portrait emphasising his royal affiliations rather than any particular aspect of his sanctity.

<sup>474</sup> Biernoff, p. 17.

<sup>475</sup> Aelred, *Opera omnia VII*, Chapter 1, 1-52, pp. 93-95. *Edouard*'s description was preceded by a prologue of which only fragments survive.

<sup>476</sup> The nun is perhaps influenced here by twelfth-century mysticism, which explores the ways in which God exceeds the capacities of bodily vision. See Akbari, p. 5; the nun, *La Vie d'Edouard le Confesseur*, trans. by Bliss, p. 29.



bones is at once frustrated and exceeded, here there is a complex interplay between the desire to see and the satisfaction of this desire. As sight breeds the desire to see more, to endlessly prolong vision ('Cum plus le veient, plus i tirent, | Cum plus en unt, plus en desirent' (33-34)), that desire is never truly satisfied. Yet what is seen also seems to overcome the angelic onlooker, overwhelming their senses to the point almost of drunkenness (30). Vision – or more precisely, the act of gazing at the divine – is something abundant that overflows the limits of even celestial senses. If sight of the saint's body in *Audree* is usually denied, the treatment of vision in *Edouard* is characterised by its excessive nature: sight of the divine in the latter text exceeds the capacities of the viewer to apprehend what is seen.

The two passages describing the exposure of Edward's incorrupt corpse – immediately following his death and at his 1102 translation – both explore how this divine surplus of sight might inflect visual encounters with the saintly body. The nun's account of the sight of Edward's revived posthumous flesh is governed by the language of quantity and sufficiency, an emphasis absent from Aelred.<sup>477</sup> The onlookers 'Mult unt cel mort cors esguardé' (5232), and reach a point when their vision has been satisfied, 'Quant il l'unt asez esguardé' (5254), at which point they enshroud the body, covering it and preparing it for burial (5256-57). Sight of the body is plentiful, and the viewers' desire to see is satiated. Yet in Edward's later translation his corpse provokes a more complex, incomplete visual abundance. Howie argues that the visibility of saints is defined neither by enclosure nor exposure, but by the 'threshold' between them, the moment of becoming visible.<sup>478</sup> Edward's translation in this text describes a series of shifting visual thresholds of this kind, in which the desired sight of the body remains always just out of reach. Although their encounter with Edward's malleable preserved limbs provides the

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<sup>477</sup> The nun's quantifiers, 'mult', 'asez', are not present in the *Vita*. This passage in Aelred reads: 'subito cadauer exanime quoddam future beatitudines praeferret insigne, cuius uultus caelesti rubore perfusus omnium assistentium in se onuertebat aspectum. Mirantur omnes, sed nudati corporis Gloria auxit admirationem quod iueo candour coruscans ita resplenduit, ut uirginitatis illius decus etiam incredulous latere non posset [...] [P]reciosis lintheis et optimis palliis corpus obuoluitur' (*Opera omnia VII*, Chapter 31, ll. 43-49, p. 157). '[S]uddenly the lifeless body offered a sign of future blessedness. His face was suffused with a heavenly rose color and drew to itself the attention of everyone about him. All marvelled, but the glory of his naked body increase their wonder because, shining with a snowy whiteness, it was so resplendent that the beauty of his virginity could not be hidden even from the incredulous. [...] [T]he body was wrapped in precious linen and a fine pall' (*The Historical Works*, trans. by Freeland, pp. 211-12).

<sup>478</sup> Howie, p. 345.

proof of his incorruption to the examiners, this encounter fuels only a desire to see more, as they desire to glimpse beneath the *sudarium* shrouding his face: ‘Ço enasprist mult lur vuleir | De sa bele face veer’ (6020-21). The partially exposed, partially covered saintly body entices the viewer to desire to see what has not yet been revealed.<sup>479</sup> As for the angels who gaze upon God, the desire to see the saintly body, rather than satiating the viewer, generates only greater desire: to look upon the saintly corpse, for the Westminster monks, is to intuit that there is something more to be seen that remains out of sight.

The unseen body is characterised by unruly potentiality: the prospect of uncovering the body provokes not only desire, but trepidation.<sup>480</sup> Perhaps wary of the sort of miraculous punishment dealt by Audrey to the undeserving who try and glimpse her, the examiners do not dare unshroud Edward’s face themselves (‘il ne sunt pas si osé’ (6022)), and Gundulf must steel himself for the task (6026). The moment of uncovering, the ‘emergence to sight’ of the saintly corpse, is as much about this body’s potential to withhold as it is about its open exposure.<sup>481</sup> Although Edward’s corpse is exposed, it continues to elude the gaze of onlookers. As I argue above, in *Edouard*, the encounter with the incorrupt body is ruled by a desire to see that is also a desire to fragment and possess, and to fix knowledge of the saintly body. The nun’s articulation of sacred vision as never wholly satisfied suggests that the incorrupt corpse might continue to resist being fully seen and fully known despite its open exposure. The body is always on the threshold of full exposure, provoking an excessive desire to see, in which the tantalising possibility that visual plenitude can be achieved is held out but not attained.

Although my discussion here has focused on the nun’s twelfth-century text, the other Anglo-Norman life of Edward, Matthew Paris’s *Estoire de Seint Aedward le Rei*, describes a similarly complex relationship to Edward’s corpse that connects sight, excess, and resistance.<sup>482</sup> Writing 1236-45, Paris, like the nun, worked from

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<sup>479</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 331.

<sup>480</sup> Sigal notes the prevalence of fear as well as respect in narratives of relic exposure, ‘Le Déroulement des translations’, p. 222.

<sup>481</sup> The phrase is Howie’s, p. 332.

<sup>482</sup> On the *Estoire*’s attribution, see Paul Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets: Kingship and the Representation of Power, 1200-1400* (Newhaven: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 58.

Aelred's *Vita*; his version exists in a single manuscript.<sup>483</sup> Paris does not draw on the nun's work, and his text is markedly different in focus, expanding, for example, on the political consequences of Edward's death leading to the Norman Conquest (*Estoire*, 4047-4344, 4445-4639).<sup>484</sup> Comparison between the nun and Paris's work further emphasises the particularity of the nun's interest in questions of sight and desire as these are directed at Edward's corpse. The nun's meditation on Edward's perfected flesh after his death is not present (*Edouard*, 5232-57), and his translation, to which the nun devotes over a hundred lines (*Edouard*, 5950-6071), is dispensed with in around twenty (*Estoire*, 4639-60). Paris condenses his description of the corpse, while adding other details, such as William I's donation of material for the shrine and Westminster Abbey's reputation (*Estoire*, 4661-80). The relics' materiality and visibility seems less important here than their political and institutional connections, connections that chime with Henry III's burgeoning devotions to Edward and later restoration of his Westminster shrine.<sup>485</sup>

Despite Paris's lack of interest in visual engagement with Edward's corpse in the text, the *Estoire*'s sole manuscript brings the visual to the fore in other ways, most notably through its illumination programme.<sup>486</sup> *Estoire* survives in a single manuscript produced c. 1240-60.<sup>487</sup> Large, detailed narrative illustrations by several hands sit at the top of almost every page.<sup>488</sup> The manuscript's illustrations focus on

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<sup>483</sup> For dating and sources, see Matthew Paris, *La Estoire de seint Aedward le rei*, ed. by Kathryn Young Wallace (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1983), pp. xxiii-xxv.

<sup>484</sup> Paris, *La Estoire de seint Aedward le rei*, ed. by Wallace, pp. xxiii-xxiv.

<sup>485</sup> On Henry III and Edward, see Badham, pp. 197-200.

<sup>486</sup> The text and the manuscript that preserves it are caught up in networks of royal female patronage and potential viewership: Paris dedicates his text to Queen Eleanor of Provence ('pur vus ai fait cest livret | [...] | Alianor, riche reine' (*Estoire*, 50-52)).

<sup>487</sup> Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Ee.3.59. The manuscript is described in Paul Binski, Patrick Zutshi, and Stella Panayotova, *Western Illuminated Manuscripts: A Catalogue of the Collection in Cambridge University Library* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 102-04. It was perhaps owned by Eleanor's daughter-in-law, Eleanor of Castile. see Paul Binski, 'Reflections on *La Estoire de seint Aedward le rei*: Hagiography and Kingship in Thirteenth-Century England', *Journal of Medieval History*, 16 (1990), 333-50 (pp. 334-35); Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets*, p. 57; Matthew Paris, *The History of Saint Edward the King*, trans. by Thelma S. Fenster and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2008), p. 27.

<sup>488</sup> On the relationship between the text of the *Estoire*, its rubrics, and images, see Victoria B. Jordan, 'The Multiple Narratives of Matthew Paris' *Estoire de seint Aedward le rei*: Cambridge: University Library MS Ee.iii.59', *Parergon*, 13 (1996), 77-92 (p. 79). Michael Camille suggests that the manuscript's emphasis on pictorial content may have made it particularly suitable for a female readership, accommodating multiple levels of literacy,

the saint's body and shrine in a way that reintroduces the focus on vision suppressed in the text. Both body and tomb are depicted multiple times, in images that stress the proximity and intertwining of saintly corpse with the bodies of the faithful that surround it (Figures 17-19). Moreover, Paris's version of Edward's 1102 translation is accompanied on fol. 36<sup>r</sup> by a striking image divided into two panels depicting this opening of Edward's tomb, followed by the re-enclosure of his body in a new raised shrine that Stephen Lamia has linked to Edward's later 1163 translation by Henry II (Figure 20).<sup>489</sup> The image succinctly collapses the two temporally distanced moments of the saint's translation.



Figure 17. Edward's burial, c. 1250-60, ink on parchment, Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Ee.3.59, fol. 29<sup>v</sup>.

'Seeing and Reading: Some Visual Implications of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy', *Art History*, 8 (1985), 26-49 (pp. 41-42).

<sup>489</sup> The right-hand panel depicts a crowned king kissing the body as it is lowered into the shrine; Stephen Lamia 'The Cross and the Crown, the Tomb and the Shrine: Decoration and Accommodation for England's Premier Saints', in *Decorations for the Holy Dead: Visual Embellishments on Tombs and Shrines of Saints*, ed. by Stephen Lamia and Elizabeth Valdez del Álamo (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), pp. 39-56 (p. 46).



Figure 18. Cures at Edward's tomb, c. 1250-60, ink on parchment, Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Ee.3.59, fol. 30<sup>r</sup>.



Figure 19. Cures at Edward's tomb, c. 1250-60, ink on parchment, Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Ee.3.59, fol. 33<sup>r</sup>.





Figure 20. The opening of Edward's tomb, c. 1250-60, ink on parchment, Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Ee.3.59, fol. 36<sup>r</sup>.

The fol. 36<sup>r</sup> image is a striking example of how representations of Edward negotiate his corpse's visibility and its sensory impact on the viewer. While the right-hand panel depicting the imminent enclosure of the corpse in a new shrine remains untouched, the left-hand panel has been heavily mutilated. The watching crowd and the exposed saintly body are almost entirely obscured by smears and scratches. There are multiple other incidences of the effacement of images in the manuscript, accommodating a range of targets and potential motivations.<sup>490</sup> Destruction is targeted at a range of figures potentially despised in medieval England for various political motives: the pope (Figure 21), invading Norman soldiers (Figure 22), and the reviled Earl Godwin (Figure 23).<sup>491</sup> This erasure also targets holy

<sup>490</sup> In particular, see Camille on the erasure of a marginal line drawing of two kissing figures at the beginning of the manuscript, 'Gothic Signs and the Surplus: The Kiss on the Cathedral', in *Contexts: Style and Values in Medieval Art and Literature*, ed. by Daniel Poirion and Nancy Freeman Regalado (= *Yale French Studies*, Special Issue (1991)), pp. 151-71 (p. 159). Camille notes elsewhere the particular targeting of this sort of erasure at images of faces or that are sexual in nature, signalling the intertwining of 'desire and denigration', 'Obscenity Under Erasure: Censorship in Medieval Illuminated Manuscripts', in *Obscenity: Social Control and Artistic Creation in the European Middle Ages*, ed. by Jan M. Ziolkowski (Leiden: Brill, 1998), pp. 139-54 (pp. 140-41).

<sup>491</sup> Kathryn Young Wallace suggests that the damage demonstrates the antipathy of a later English owner towards despised figures such as the pope and Norman invaders, Paris, *La Estoire de saint Aedward le rei*, ed. by Wallace, p. xv, n. 12. Yet the targeting of such destruction towards both the Norman invaders and the Anglo-Saxon Godwin prevents any

figures, such as Saint Peter (Figures 24-25), a monk recording miracles at Edward's shrine, and a supplicant to the saint (Figure 18). Likewise, in the image on fol. 36<sup>r</sup> it is unclear whether both Edward's body and the approaching crowd are targets of this obscuring erasure, or whether Edward's effacement is an incidental casualty of an objection to one of the gathered bishops and other religious figures who look at the corpse.<sup>492</sup> As the manuscript depicts Edward's corpse elsewhere, it seems unlikely that the erasure indicates resistance to the body's open display. The similar effacement of Saint Peter suggests that there may be a devotional aspect to Edward's erasure, a desire to gain a more intimate proximity with the saintly body through tactile contact.



Figure 21. Edward's messengers receive a letter from the pope freeing him from his pilgrimage obligation (left) and return to England (right), c. 1250-60, ink on parchment, Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Ee.3.59, fol. 20<sup>r</sup>.

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clear-cut political alignment. On the erasure of despised figures in hagiographic manuscripts more generally, see Jennifer Borland, 'Unruly Reading: The Consuming Role of Touch in the Experience of a Medieval Manuscript', in *Scraped, Stroked, and Bound: Materially Engaged Readings of Medieval Manuscripts*, ed. by Jonathan Wilcox (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), pp. 97-114 (pp. 97-98).

<sup>492</sup> Lamia suggests the eradication is focused on the bishops gathered around the corpse, 'The Cross and the Crown', p. 46.



Figure 22. The Normans land in England, William trips in the sand, *c.* 1250-60, ink on parchment, Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Ee.3.59, fol. 34<sup>r</sup>.



Figure 23. Earl Godwin's death by choking at the dinner table, *c.* 1250-60, ink on parchment, Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Ee.3.59, fol. 25<sup>r</sup>.





Figure 24. Saint Peter appears to a hermit in a vision (left), the hermit writes his vision (right), *c.* 1250-60, ink on parchment, Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Ee.3.59, fol. 15<sup>v</sup>.



Figure 25. Saint Peter embarking from a fisherman's boat (left) and consecrating Westminster Abbey (right), *c.* 1250-60, ink on parchment, Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Ee.3.59, fol. 18<sup>r</sup>.

Whatever the motivation, this erasure suggests the manuscript was a powerful artefact enabling various relationships between the body of the reader and the bodies within its pages, demonstrating the ways in which the manuscript can participate in the material networks that communicate and embody the saint. Edward's exposed, visible body is rendered once more inaccessible to the gaze, unable to be seen, not enclosed but scraped off the surface of the page. A possible desire to see more, to get closer to the saint renders this body further from reach, as the desired body is subjected to destruction.<sup>493</sup> Somewhat ironically, the saint's body has, in the illuminated form it takes in the manuscript, been subject to the sort of damage and decomposition from which it is spared within the text. In the two panels of this image, the saint's corpse is at once seen and unseen, exposed and withheld from the gaze, whole and fragmented.

The most clearly visible aspect of Figure 20's left-hand panel appears to show the suffering faces of three supplicants, who have inserted their bodies into the roundels in the base of Edward's shrine, presumably in search of miraculous intervention.<sup>494</sup> These bodies are themselves already visually fragmented, insofar as only their faces are visible through the tomb windows. Through the interruption of sight of Edward's body, the *Estoire* manuscript's mutilator has drawn the gaze away from the saint's incorrupt flesh, and focused it on the suffering bodies of his supplicants. The nun's text similarly foregrounds the ways in which the bodies of the faithful intervene in communicating the saintly. Her dense interweaving of sight and desire, containment and revelation is exemplified in her treatment of Edward's most renowned miraculous power: restoring vision to the blind.<sup>495</sup> She writes that Edward is so absorbed in his chaste purity ('Ki par tres chaste netee | Out sun quoer dedenz asorbe' (*Edouard*, 3287-88)), that he sees no earthly things that might provoke delight: 'Que il del mund rien ne veeit | U il deliter se pueit' (3289-90). Edward's saintly chastity, the guarantee of his sainthood and his posthumous incorruption, rests on his rejection of his own position as viewing subject, which amounts to a

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<sup>493</sup> Camille, 'Obscenity Under Erasure', p. 141.

<sup>494</sup> The construction of saintly tombs with 'windows' into which petitioners could insert their bodies was common throughout the Latin West, probably in emulation of the structure of Christ's tomb in the Holy Sepulchre, John Crook, *The Architectural Setting of the Cult of Saints in the Early Christian West, c. 300-1200* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), p. 255. This means of seeking saintly healing is also shown in Figures 17-19. It is also explored in the miracles of Thomas Becket, see Chapter Three, pp. 203-04.

<sup>495</sup> For Edward's healing of the blind, see 3361-74, 3483-92, 3605-15, 3643-69, 5602-69.

rejection of an illegitimate desire for the earthly things he might see. If medieval vision is a site of transformative intercorporeality, here Edward refuses to engage in visual exchanges that might corrupt his body by engaging with earthly desires.<sup>496</sup> Again the text characterises Edward's chastity as bodily containment, as the saint withdraws from visual encounters with the world around him. The saintly body is self-contained, isolated, not enlisted into the intercorporeal networks that vision institutes. Yet it is precisely this refusal to see beyond the contained absorption of his own chaste body that enables Edward to miraculously illuminate the sightless, to open vision up to his supplicants (3285-86). The sightless, chaste saintly body enables the restoration of vision.

Edward's translation establishes the complexity of looking at his chaste, incorrupt, dead body. His corpse is openly exposed to the gaze, extracted from the thing-like indeterminacy of concealing entombment to solidify knowledge of his saintly chastity. The exposed chaste body is defined by its containment and closure, resisting fragmentary partition in networks of possession. Yet, despite the body's physical integrity, the visual encounter with the saint's body suggests that the closed assemblage of Edward's body might have the potential to circulate beyond its material boundaries. The miracles produced by Edward's chaste isolation interrupt his containment, emphasising the way his body extends out into the world and affects the bodies of those around him. In other words, Edward's miracles reassert the openness of his body as a potential participant in bodily networks with those who seek healing from it.

## Overflowing bodies

In this final section, I consider a selection of the miraculous cures Edward performs in life and death. These cures, in which Edward's chaste saintly body enters into proximity with his supplicants' sick bodies, bring into focus what it means to see and touch extraordinary bodies of different types. The nun's treatment of the miracles emphasises bodily isolation and collaboration in a way that explores the social, symbolic, and physical networks in which Edward and his venerated can and cannot

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<sup>496</sup> On vision, see above, pp. 139-40.

participate. While Audrey's body is integrated primarily into networks associated with nonhuman artefacts, I argue that Edward's body is, in these miraculous healings, more closely intertwined with other human bodies. Though Edward's chaste body is known for its wholeness and self-containment, his healing miracles reveal his body's ongoing capacity for incorporation into networks with other bodies and entities in ways that affirm Edward's sanctity.

The first cure Edward performs, during his lifetime, is that of Gilles Michel, who is paralysed from the waist down.<sup>497</sup> Gilles travels fruitlessly to Rome six times in search of healing, until Saint Peter advises him that he will be cured if Edward carries him from the palace to the church at Westminster (2338-64). Gilles's body is radically different from Edward's perfected flesh: in contrast to Edward's chaste bodily containment, Gilles's body is described as improperly bounded, characterised by fleshiness, corruption, and excessive porosity in an inversion of the traits associated with Edward's corpse (2407-18). Gilles's body is defined by its constricting immobility (2301-06), while Edward's translation stresses his continued malleability even decades post mortem.<sup>498</sup> Gilles's body weeps blood and poison ('Le sanc decurt del chaitif cors | Des plaies curt le venim fors' (2421-22)), while Edward's corpse actively maintains its unimpaired wholeness, not allowing even a single hair to be extracted from it.

Alongside these contrasts, *Edouard* fosters a series of distorted echoes between the saintly and the suffering body. Both bodies draw the reader's gaze. In a voyeuristic description of Gilles's suffering body that prefigures *Edouard's* account of Edward's translated corpse, the reader is invited to focus on each bodily member piece by piece:

Ses quisses retortes esteient  
Et vers ses reins se flechiseient.  
La furent ses taluns turnez  
Et de cele char encharnez.

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<sup>497</sup> As the earliest cure Edward performs, the miracle is paradigmatic: the description of Gilles's body and its interactions with Edward's contain many elements that later miracles replicate.

<sup>498</sup> The opposition Gilles's body proposes, between a sickness characterised by stiffness and immobility, and a healing associated with loosening and flowing, is a recurring feature in saintly miracles, extending back to the miracles recorded by Gregory of Tours in the sixth century, Raymond Van Dam, *Saints and their Miracles in Late Antique Gaul* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 111.

(2301-04).

As for the description of Edward's corpse, the textual gaze focused on the body is overlain with hints of troubling eroticism: the passage focuses on Gilles's thighs and loins, often associated with lust and illicit desire.<sup>499</sup> The spectre of sexual desire intensifies a commonplace medieval belief that sickness is associated with sin and that physical illness's visible symptoms reflect the soul's ailing inner state.<sup>500</sup> Gilles actively demands that his undesirable body be looked at: he approaches the king's chamberlain, insisting that he look upon his body: 'Veiz tu quel cors d'home?' (2337). Gilles's exclamation demands a comparison of his body to those of other men, foregrounding his difference from them. The text notes the affective response the sight of this body provokes in viewers: 'Que tut cil qui tel le veeient, | Dulur et pitié en aveient' (2315-16). Although Gilles's body could not be further from the perfection of Edward's whole corpse, both of these bodies are exceptional in the sense that they do not act as bodies are expected to.

Indeed, Gilles's miraculous healing fosters a sense of proximity between saint and devotee's bodies.<sup>501</sup> The cure is articulated as a tactile intermingling of the saint's body with that of Gilles. The text dwells on the tight embrace between the two as Edward carries Gilles on his back:

Al col lu rei ad joint ses meins.  
 Mut l'enbraça estreitement,  
 [...]  
 Les ordes mains al piz li sient  
 Et les eskerdus bras l'aprimient.  
 Les dras sulliz et desirez  
 Sunt as reals dras ajustez.  
 Unkes nusche d'or preciuse  
 Ne fud al rei si delituse

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<sup>499</sup> Baswell explores the potential erotic charge of descriptions of Gilles's body as it appears in Matthew Paris's *Estoire*, in which the healing body soaks Edward's body and clothes down to his knees or thighs, 'Vostre cors e robe soille | E gesk'as garetz vus moille' (1983-84), 'King Edward and the Cripple', in *Chaucer and the Challenges of Medievalism: Studies in Honor of Henry Ansgar Kelly*, ed. by Donka Minkova and Theresa Tinkle (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2003), pp. 15-28 (p. 23).

<sup>500</sup> Philippe Ménard, 'Les Fous dans la société médiévale: le témoignage de la littérature au XII<sup>e</sup> et au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle', *Romania*, 98 (1977), 433-59 (p. 452).

<sup>501</sup> Baswell, 'Disability Networks in the Campsey Manuscript', p. 172.

Cume les mains al poverin,  
 As queles sun col fud aclin.  
 (2378-88)

The contrast between Edward's royal clothing and Gilles's suffering body and soiled garments is emphasised (2381-84), yet attenuated as they intertwine in this embrace. Gilles is compared favourably to a precious necklace: Edward would rather wear Gilles around his neck than the jewellery owed to his status. Gilles's suffering body is drawn into the collection of items that adorn Edward's body – indicating that, while Edward's clothing denotes his earthly status, Gilles is a more valuable adornment that communicates Edward's saintly, spiritual *virtus*.

Gilles's cure heightens this sense of intermingling bodies: his body expulses fluids, dampening Edward's royal attire: 'Icele fraile purreture | Muilla le real vesteüre' (2423-24). The decay of Gilles's porous, exposed body is absorbed into the regal fabrics that cover the saint's body, inviting a comparison that once again contrasts the two bodies even as it reveals the way they are interwoven in the moment of the miracle.<sup>502</sup> Gilles's cure is an instructive example of the multiple meanings the supplicant's abject body can hold. Gilles is socially disruptive, as the court mocks the sight of him carried on the king's back (2403).<sup>503</sup> His contact with the saint threatens to infect Edward not only with the physical stain of his bodily fluids, but with the loss of social status. Yet for Edward his proximity to this contagious body is a source of delight: the saint 'delita forment' (2380) in their tight embrace. Mingling with the disruptive flesh of the sick allows Edward to perform saintly humility, recuperating (or appropriating) this body into a meaningful narrative of sanctity. The miraculous healing at once weaves saint and invalid together, and is instantiated by this same interweaving. Edward's role as a performer of saintly healing is distributed across multiple bodies and artefacts – not only those belonging to Edward, but also those of Gilles, including the clothing that envelops them both.

Gilles's healing not only physically transforms the supplicant, but has a transformative effect on the saint. Discussing the episode as it is recounted in Paris's *Estoire*, Christopher Baswell argues that this first miracle marks not only the

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<sup>502</sup> Baswell, 'King Edward and the Cripple', p. 23.

<sup>503</sup> On the disruptive nature of the sick, see François-Jérôme Beaussart, 'Figures de la maladie dans *Les Miracles de Nostre Dame*', *Médiévales*, 4 (1983), 74-90 (pp. 75, 86).

physical healing of Gilles's body, but also a transition in Edward's transformation towards sainthood.<sup>504</sup> Baswell claims the miracle's public nature marks Edward's translation from pious king to recognised saint.<sup>505</sup> In a similar way, I argue, the nun's text explicitly positions Gilles's body as making Edward's sanctity visible: in his vision, Peter explains to Gilles that God has held back from healing him so that Edward's sainthood can be demonstrated through his body, 'Respit prist de [s]uncors saner | Pur la sainté Edward mustrer' (2345-46). Gilles's fluid, material overflow is matched by the spiritual surplus of Edward's *virtus*. If the surface of Edward's incorrupt corpse makes his internal saintly chastity visible, Gilles's body is also a site where Edward's sainthood becomes visible. What is more, the emphasis on tactile contact with Edward as a vehicle of healing focuses attention specifically on the saintliness of his body. In this miracle account, Edward's living body already behaves like a holy relic.<sup>506</sup>

As Gilles's miracle suggests, the bodies of the sick are useful, meaningful tools to be co-opted into the narrative of Edward's sainthood. The ways in which the bodies that Edward heals express his saintliness is dramatised – in a different manner to Gilles's cure – by the saint's healing of an (unnamed) disfigured and infertile woman. This miracle shares certain commonalities with that of Gilles: like Gilles, the woman's body is described as the inverse of Edward's own perfected flesh. She is afflicted with a tumorous growth on her swollen face, 'Une glandres laides bozues | [...] | Sun vis ert neir de l'emfleüre' (3095-97) and her blood rots (3098). Worms issue from her swelling and eat her flesh (3104-06). The woman suffers the corrupting decomposition of dead flesh during her lifetime, unlike Edward, whose flesh resists the effects of the grave. This body is also one which resists the gaze. The sick woman repulses those around her, as she is loathed by her husband and relatives (3174-78). Her disfigurement forcibly isolates her from the marital and familial relationships that Edward willingly rejects in favour of spiritual ties to God. The rejection of her husband and family is framed as their refusal to see her, or to let her impinge on their other senses: 'Qu'al lur voil mais ne la veïssent | Ne de lui parler

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<sup>504</sup> Baswell, 'King Edward and the Cripple', p. 22.

<sup>505</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>506</sup> On the living saint as relic, see Brigitte Cazelles, 'En odeur de sainteté', *Médiévales*, 2 (1982), 86-99 (p. 96).

nen oïssent' (3177-78). She is excluded not only from society, but from the intercorporeal sensory networks instantiated by the gaze.

As was the case for Gilles's healing, the woman's cure not only has a transformative effect on the devotee's flesh, but also involves direct contact with the saint's body, a contact that is here more obviously heterosexual in nature. The cure occurs through an intimate sensory encounter between the royal saintly body and the supplicant's corrupt flesh (3214-24). Again, as for Gilles, the text reflects on how this transformative contact between saint and supplicant might dialogue with Edward's chaste body: miraculous contact between male and female bodies not only heals, but also chastely produces children. As the unnamed woman is doubly afflicted with disfiguration and infertility, so she is doubly cured, as God works through Edward to allow her to conceive:

Si ad Deu lu rei honuré  
 [...]
 Qui par lui la femme sana  
 E a baraigne enfant duna.  
 (3249-52)

Both the woman's facial healing and the holy gift of the child make intelligible the special favour that God pays Edward. Jennifer N. Brown situates this miracle of infertility and childbearing as an intervention into anxieties over Edward's own chaste, childless body.<sup>507</sup> While Edward's chaste bodily containment is integral to his sainthood, his refusal to participate in networks of secular lineage results in political crisis, potentially exposing the incompatibility of his dual nature as saint and king.<sup>508</sup> As for Audrey, the virginal saintly body causes social disruption. Edward's lack of heirs is a pragmatic concern, leading to a succession crisis that leaves England in disarray (4634-38). It also plays into deeper anxieties rooted in the symbolic qualities attributed to kings' bodies in the Middle Ages: kingly bodies are usually figured as expansive and multivalent, embodying the health of the land and kingdom.<sup>509</sup> Edward's saintly infertility threatens such expansiveness and leads to an

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<sup>507</sup> Brown, 'Body, Gender and Nation', pp. 148, 153.

<sup>508</sup> Bartlett, p. 219.

<sup>509</sup> Binski, *Medieval Death*, p. 65; Brown, 'Body, Gender and Nation', p. 149. See Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 9, 15, on medieval conceptions of the king's symbolic body, and Vauchez, p. 190 on the links between landscape and the royal body.



actual and symbolic rupture in England's body politic. At the same time, however, Edward's chastity usefully explains his childlessness, spiritually and politically validating what might otherwise be seen as a failing; chastity allows Edward's childless state to be understood as holy rather than a dereliction of his kingly duties.<sup>510</sup>

Edward's miracles, with their focus on the healing and reintegration into society of ruptured bodies, potentially address concerns about England's broken body, as the saint restores the kingdom's health.<sup>511</sup> The unnamed woman's healing resolves the competing demands of Edward's kingly and saintly roles. Her facial swelling identifies her illness as scrofula, a disease whose cure was, by the twelfth century when the nun was writing, linked to the 'royal touch' bestowed by English and French monarchs.<sup>512</sup> This cure conflates the miracle-working attributes of Edward's sacred and royal bodies. The miracle also explores how Edward might generate spiritual genealogies outside blood ties, proving a fertile monarch despite his lack of heirs. The ways in which virgin saints can establish communal genealogies outside physical procreation is explored at length in *Audree*, which emphasises the communities of holy women and monastic foundations the saint establishes (*Audree*, 1629-50).<sup>513</sup> From this point of view, virginity is no longer a barrier to the saint's posterity. In the miracle involving the unnamed woman, Edward facilitates conception in an infertile body, spiritually enabling procreation despite his chastity.<sup>514</sup> The unnamed woman's healed and fertile body is a site of generation for

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<sup>510</sup> Barlow points out that the first evidence for Edward's chastity comes from the eleventh-century *Vita* commissioned by his widow Edith rather than during his lifetime, signalling the way it is deployed for political ends, *Edward the Confessor*, p. 82; see also Elliott, p. 123; Lewis, p. 87.

<sup>511</sup> Brown, 'Body, Gender and Nation', p. 148.

<sup>512</sup> Marc Bloch, *Les Rois thaumaturges: étude sur le caractère surnaturel attribué à la puissance royale particulièrement en France et en Angleterre* (1924; repr. Paris: Armand Colin, 1961), pp. 24-25.

<sup>513</sup> Virginia Blanton, 'King Anna's Daughters: Genealogical Narrative and Cult Formation in the *Liber Eliensis*', *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques*, 30.1 (2004), 127-49 (p. 129); Virginia Blanton, 'Presenting the Sister Saints of Ely, or Using Kinship to Increase a Monastery's Status as a Cult Center', *Literature Compass*, 5 (2008), 755-71 (p. 763); Wogan-Browne, 'Rerouting the Dower', p. 38.

<sup>514</sup> Reading Aelred's version of this miracle, Brown links Edward's chaste procreation specifically to the coronation of Henry II, which restored an element of the Anglo-Saxon line to the throne, positioning him as a restorative heir to the saintly Edward after the break in succession, 'Body, Gender and Nation', pp. 153-54. As Brown points out, the nun's version attenuates this vision of Edward's chaste fertility somewhat, assigning the agency

the saint: Edward's miracles construct an alternative spiritual and physical genealogy outside conventional reproduction.

If for Audrey material artefacts communicate her sainthood even in the absence of her body, in Edward's case, the bodies of the faithful generate more bodies like the saint's even as this body remains chaste. The miracle produces bodies like Edward's not only through the spiritual generation of substitute saintly heirs, but through the potential for bodily imitation of his incorrupt perfection. Edward's healing hands transform the unnamed woman's body, moving from ruptured and excessive to healthy and whole. The assertion of the woman's corporeal wholeness is definitive, as her healed wounds leave no scars behind:

Desque sun malan fud sané.  
Tost se revignent les crevaces,  
De plaies tapisent les traces  
(3238-40)

No traces of her suffering or the miracle that took place are left on her skin. The miracle entails an erasure of fleshly evidence that might point to it. This is a striking difference from the nun's Latin source, where the healing leaves a scar. In the Latin, the scar covers the wound ('obducta uulneribus cicatrice'), presenting a healed surface that does not conceal its past rupture.<sup>515</sup> *Edouard* recounts not only a restoration of bodily wholeness, but an effacement of evidence that the body was anything but whole, a totalising enforcement of wholeness. Through her contact with the saint, the unnamed woman's healed, flawless body approaches the perfection of Edward's own flesh.

The invisibility of the unnamed woman's wounds is further evidence of the saint's miraculous *virtus*, even as it visually conceals explicit evidence of Edward's intervention. Like Audrey's scar-less neck wound, the unnamed woman's healed body attests to Edward's holiness through what can no longer be seen, a complex mode of temporally defined vision that acknowledges the absence of something once visible. This mode of vision relies on the body's embeddedness in narrative to render it meaningful, conveying the knowledge of the saint's healing power. Indeed,

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for the conception and gift of a child to God working through Edward rather than to the saint himself.

<sup>515</sup> Aelred writes: 'obducta uulneribus cicatrice incolumis rediret ad propria' (*Opera omnia* VII, Chapter 29, ll. 31-32, p. 132). '[S]he returned to her own home healed, her wounds covered by a scar' (*The Historical Works*, trans. by Freeland, p. 180)).

perhaps the greatest difference between the bodies of Edward and his faithful is their relationship to temporality. Edward's incorrupt body is defined by its unchanging, enduring nature. His living body already behaves and is treated like a relic, while his relics are a refreshed and lifelike corpse, adrift from the linear progression of time. In contrast, the function of the bodies of those who seek healing is precisely to be transformed.<sup>516</sup> Miraculously healed bodies are narrative bodies that encode not only an instability of corporeal boundaries, but the promise of narrative and temporal change. Miracle narratives like that of the unnamed woman trace the reintegration of the healed body into society – the recipient of the miracle is transformed from social outcast to reconstituted member of family and social groupings, from unruly body to intelligible, integrated body.<sup>517</sup> Miraculous bodies thus make visible a clear divide between past suffering and present reintegration, a before and after clearly distinguished by transformative moment of the miracle.

Certain themes thread throughout Edward's miracles: bodily corruption and instability, the supplicant's body as object of the gaze, tactile contact between saint and worshipper. Formulaic repetition is a common feature of medieval miracle collections, both within a single collection and across the genre as a whole.<sup>518</sup> *Edouard* demonstrates the usefulness of this repetition as an accumulation of common patterns reiterates and reinforces the enactment of Edward's saintly *virtus*. In particular, repetition enforces continuity between the miracles performed during Edward's lifetime and those performed at his tomb. The cure of Raul of Normandy, like that of Gilles, occupies a transitional position in the nun's text, the first miracle Edward performs after death. Having benefitted from the king's charity during his lifetime, Raul travels to the site of Edward's 'saint cors' to seek help once again (5377-95). Raul's healing rehearses many of the features found in Gilles's cure. Raul's legs are paralysed, preventing him from walking (5358-63). Again the sick body exceeds its boundaries, leaking 'venims' from open wounds (5430), boundaries which are restored through miraculous healing (5433). The repetition of these features asserts that Edward's relics continue to make the saint's miraculous *virtus* present and accessible even after his death.

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<sup>516</sup> Beaussart, 'Figures de la maladie', p. 76.

<sup>517</sup> Patrick J. Geary, *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), p. 171; Michael E. Goodich, *Miracles and Wonders: The Development of the Concept of Miracle, 1150-1350* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), p. 12.

<sup>518</sup> Goodich, p. 5.

Yet Raul's cure also explores how the miracles produced by Edward's posthumous relics, enclosed in his tomb, might forge a different set of associations between saint and supplicant to those woven by his living body. As in earlier miracles, Raul's body holds out the possibility of resemblance to Edward's saintly body. To allow him to move around, Raul devises a hollow vessel into which he inserts his body:

Un vaissel fait cum un bacin,  
 Cave fud e bien enterin.  
 Tut sun cors d'aval la centure  
 Ad puis mis en cele caveure.  
 (5370-73)

Raul supplements and surrounds his fleshy body with the prosthesis of his 'vaissel', his moving body an intermingled assemblage of human flesh and the nonhuman material of this basin. Moreover, the terminology of the vessel here recalls the characterisation of Edward's body as a chaste vessel (1109), and the vessel as a reliquary container for sacred artefacts (3065). In Edward's first posthumous miracle, the lexical resonances of 'vaissel' refocus attention on the complex nature of Edward's bodily containment as it is manifested by his corpse's integrity as well as its containment in the reliquary. Raul's miracle reminds the reader that while 'vaissel' carries implications of containment, it is also about bodily mobility and transmission. Before his cure, Raul's mobility is aided by his (literal) prosthetic vessel; proximity to the metaphoric vessel of Edward's chaste body miraculously enables further movement, supplanting the need for physical mobility aids. Raul's cure highlights the fact that Edward's chaste bodily containment is not to be equated with intangibility or isolation, but is rather a form of miraculous expansiveness, mobility, and exchange.

Once again, the miracle at Edward's relics transforms not only Raul's body from illness to health, but has an effect on the saint. Sight of the miracle provokes greater veneration of Edward's body:

Toz iceus ki l'ume unt veü,  
 [...]  
 Depuis unt mult sun cors requis  
 (5444-46)

The miraculous encounter between the bodies of saint and suppliant also reinforces and makes visible the saint's sanctity. Although after Edward's death his body is not as available to the touch of the suppliants as it is in his lifetime, the status of the saint's body remains integrated with those of his venerators. The recognition of Edward's corpse as a relic rests on its ability to provoke miraculous change in the faithful's frail bodies. In its sanctity, Edward's corpse exceeds his viewers' abilities to experience it: overflowing their senses, resisting their grasp, surpassing their understanding, incarnating a surplus of spiritual and political values. The bodies of the faithful are socially and sensorially disruptive in ways that contrast sharply with Edward's perfected flesh: these bodies are corrupt, exposed, excessive, attracting and repelling the gaze. Yet, as Edward's miracles demonstrate, it is these disruptive bodies that make the holiness of the saint's body manifest.

To close this chapter, I want to reflect briefly on how the ideas explored within *Edouard* about wholeness and fragmentation, surplus and lack, exposure and concealment, vision and desire, and the intertwining of bodies and artefacts, might inflect the nature of the text itself. This reflection on the status of the textual account is explicitly encouraged by an incident that occurs during Edwards's lifetime, which foregrounds the connection between miracle and narrative. While attending mass, the king and his companion, Earl Lievrich, receive a vision in which Christ reveals himself corporeally and openly in place of the Host: 'A ses amis corporelment | S'est demustré apertement' (2995-96). The episode condenses the concerns with sight, desire, and body displayed throughout *Edouard*. The miracle is witnessed only by those worthy of seeing ('Digne de testimonier' (2984-85)). This divine vision is characterised by the abundant, inexhaustible delight it provokes (3002, 3021-22). The apparition overwhelms the senses, exceeding the capacity of its witnesses to express it: Edward and Lievrich recount their vision to each other, overwhelmed not only by the vision, but also by telling it and hearing about it ('Ne de l'oïr ne del cunter | Ne s'en pourent pas saüier' (3035-36)). Here the visual encounter is intermingled with its verbal recounting, which shares in vision's qualities of overwhelming inexhaustibility.

The nun suggests that narrative can provide an experience of the divine paralleling that generated by direct sight, a suggestion reinforced by the vision's aftermath. Edward humbly swears Lievrich to secrecy about what they have witnessed. Lievrich nevertheless recounts the miracle to a holy man, who records a

written account and encloses it with some unidentified relics: ‘Cil ad bien l’escrist ordené, | Od les reliques l’ad fermé’ (3059-60).<sup>519</sup> This episode is a reminder that the written text may be assimilated into the complex networks of the saintly body, which is in turn identified with its container. Indeed, this identification is clearly emphasised in this episode: the reliquary is referred to as a ‘vessel’ (3065), recalling the metaphor of the saint’s body. The enclosure of text and saintly body together in the same vessel suggests that writing can participate in the communication and shared qualities of the relic; it also raises the question of how visible the relic should be. For *Edouard*’s characters, the reliquary’s contents are not meant to be discovered or revealed (‘il repusse estre truvé’ (3058)): once enclosed within the reliquary vessel’s concealing confines, relic and text alike should remain unattainable and ungraspable.

Yet, in the same way that Edward’s unopened tomb provokes the desire to see the unstable thing-like body that lies within, so what is meant to be hidden here is exposed, when the reliquary is opened after Edward’s death:

Et cel escrit dedenz truverent  
 Od les reliques ke loec erent.  
 La lettre unt lite, s’unt veü  
 Cum li reis vit lu rei Jesu.  
 Si ad li plus Jesus mustré  
 Que li reis Edward out celé  
 (3067-72)

Despite Edward’s desire for this episode to remain hidden, Christ ensures that it is revealed to the faithful to spread knowledge of Edward’s sanctity (3073-74). Like the descriptions of the saint’s body within the text, the written record of the saint’s life in this passage is subjected to an exposure that it supposedly resists, moving from enclosed concealment to visible revelation. Moreover, the nun asserts the capacity of written text to reveal Edward to the gaze, figuring the act of reading as a visual encounter with the saint (3069). As in *Audree*, albeit in a very different way, here the text in material form acts as part of the network surrounding the saint that makes his sanctity present. The text shares in the qualities and treatment of Edward’s body, and continues to make the saint posthumously visible.

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<sup>519</sup> The storage of documents inside reliquaries was not unusual, the relics potentially conferring greater value on the contents of the document. See Dierkens, p. 242.

Similar echoes of the text's contents might inform our understanding of *Edouard's* manuscript transmission more broadly, in particular the ways the nun's text engages with questions of fragmentation and excess. The nun's account of Edward's posthumous miracles and her descriptions of his incorrupt corpse survive in just one Vatican manuscript.<sup>520</sup> Although the Vatican manuscript preserves the longest version of *Edouard*, it is not complete, missing over a thousand lines at the text's beginning. In the Vatican version, the nun inserts a reflection on her own textual composition immediately following Edward's death, before his first posthumous miracle. She notes her affiliation with Barking and defends her writing from charges of inferiority due to her gender (5304-05, 5314-15). She includes a typical request to her readers to pray that Christ will grant her a place in heaven alongside Edward (5324-35). The prayer, and in particular its closing 'Amen', strongly suggest this is the end of the text – yet the nun's account continues for over a thousand more lines. Indeed, the text seems to lack any formal closure even at the point where it comes to a halt: the text simply ends after recounting the miraculous healing of a Westminster monk (6546-6685). Although Aelred's text ends with the same episode, Francesco Marzella's edition indicates that in most of its manuscripts it closes with an *explicit* that announces the text's closure: 'Explicit vita sancti Aedwardi regis'.<sup>521</sup> There is no such concession to closure in the Vatican *Edouard*. It is not uncommon for miracle collections to peter to a close with no formal ending; such a lack of closure might be interpreted as an indication of the unending nature of the saint's miracles, the continual possibility that more may be performed.<sup>522</sup> The formal closure of the nun's prayer marks a threshold, rather than a conclusion: it signals the end of Edward's earthly life, and the beginning of his eternal existence as heavenly resident and miracle-worker. The lack of closure to his posthumous miracles leaves space for their continued multiplication, pointing to a miraculous plenitude that exceeds the capabilities of the text.

In the Campsey version, the text ends even more abruptly, before Edward's death, after an evocation of his love for Christ and Saints John and Peter (4240). There is no formal ending – indeed, the fact that the text does not recount Edward's

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<sup>520</sup> The posthumous miracles are also preserved in the prose *remaniement*.

<sup>521</sup> Aelred, *Opera omnia* VII, p. 181.

<sup>522</sup> Bartlett, p. 562; Patricia Cox Miller, 'Visceral Seeing: The Holy Body in Late Ancient Christianity', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 12.4 (2004), 391-411 (p. 399).

death, in many ways the focal point of a saint's life, gives the impression that the text is unfinished. The truncated narrative points towards a surplus (of text, of narrative, of knowledge about the saint) that is not recorded on the page. The reader is struck with the awareness that there is something missing, something beyond the material artefact of the book, something that remains inaccessible and unknowable. The Campsey *Edouard* is followed immediately on the page by the life of Edmund of Canterbury, another English confessor saint. The open-ended nature of Edward's life as it leads into that of Edmund's invites reflection on the ways in which the lives of other saints may be modelled on his, spiritually prolonging his life through *imitatio*. It also suggests the ways in which the texts within the Campsey collection bleed into each other, the end of one account of sanctity leading into the beginning of another, creating an impression of sainthood as perpetually renewed. If the Campsey *Edouard* seems incomplete when considered in isolation, when read as part of a collection of lives, as a fragment of a larger whole, it points instead towards an interconnected sacred plenitude.



## Chapter Three. Blood, Boundaries, and Sacred Spaces in the Cult of Thomas Becket

On 29 December 1170, Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury and head of the English church, was murdered within the walls of his own cathedral. In the culmination of years of conflict between Becket and Henry II over the limits of ecclesiastical power, four knights attached to Henry's court entered the cathedral, hacked open Becket's skull, and spilt his blood on the ground.<sup>523</sup> Popular belief in Becket's miraculous healing abilities flourished almost immediately.<sup>524</sup> Within three years of his murder Becket was officially canonised, and he remained England's most popular saint until his cult's suppression during the Reformation.<sup>525</sup> While the saints studied in previous chapters attained a level of popularity beyond their cult centres, the international dimension of Becket's veneration is particularly striking: cult sites and artefacts associated with Becket proliferated rapidly across Europe, fuelled by the distribution of the saint's blood relics and clothing.<sup>526</sup> There was a

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<sup>523</sup> Frank Barlow, *Thomas Becket* (London: Orion, 1997), p. 236.

<sup>524</sup> Paul Webster, 'The Cult of St Thomas Becket: An Historiographical Pilgrimage', in *The Cult of St Thomas Becket in the Plantagenet World, c. 1170-c. 1220*, ed. by Paul Webster and Marie-Pierre Gelin (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2016), pp. 1-24 (pp. 1-2).

<sup>525</sup> For Becket's canonisation, see Anne J. Duggan, 'Becket is Dead! Long Live St Thomas', in *The Cult of St Thomas Becket*, ed. by Webster and Gelin, pp. 25-51 (pp. 27-28). Canterbury was ransacked in 1538; in 1539 a general injunction called for the destruction of visual and textual material related to Becket, Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c. 1400-c. 1580*, 2nd edn (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), p. 355. For Becket's suppression beyond Canterbury, Andrew Hughes, 'Defacing Becket: Damaged Books for the Office', in *Hortus troporum: florilegium in honorem Gunillae Iversen; A Festschrift in Honour of Professor Gunilla Iversen on the Occasion of her Retirement as Chair of Latin at Stockholm University*, ed. by Alexander Andrée and Erika Kihlmann (Stockholm: Stockholms Universitet, 2008), pp. 162-75 (p. 162). For Henry VIII's proclamation, *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, ed. by Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin, 3 vols (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964-69), I (1964), pp. 270-76.

<sup>526</sup> Becket's cult extended from Scandinavia to Italy, Spain to Poland and Hungary, see Richard Gameson, 'The Early Imagery of Thomas Becket', in *Pilgrimage: The English Experience from Becket to Bunyan*, ed. by Colin Morris and Peter Roberts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 46-89 (p. 50); Kay Brainerd Slocum, *The Cult of Thomas Becket: History and Historiography Through Eight Centuries* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), pp. 74, 77-80. Henry II's daughters played a particularly important role in spreading Becket's cult through their marriages into European royal families. For Matilda's role in popularising Becket in Saxony and Bavaria, see Colette Bowie, 'Matilda, Duchess of Saxony (1168-89) and the Cult of Thomas Becket: A Legacy of Appropriation', in *The Cult of St Thomas Becket*, ed. by Webster and Gelin, pp. 113-31 (pp. 113, 129). For Eleanor's involvement in Spain, see José Manuel Cerda, 'Leonor Plantagenet and the Cult of Thomas

particular concentration of cult locations in Angevin-ruled Normandy and the kingdom of France, which also provided a steady stream of pilgrims visiting Canterbury, attesting to cross-Channel devotional connections cemented by Becket.<sup>527</sup> This brief overview of Becket's veneration foregrounds how his cult is marked both by geographic expansiveness and by the centralising locus of Canterbury. Both Becket's expansiveness and Canterbury's centralising force are contingent on the saint's spilled blood: the distribution of his blood relics and the bloodshed of his cathedral martyrdom. In this chapter I interrogate the relationship between place and blood in Becket's twelfth- and thirteenth-century cult.

I focus on the representation of Becket's blood and of sacred space in an early French life of the saint, the *Vie de saint Thomas* by Guernes de Pont Sainte-Maxence (1172-74), as well as in architectural, visual, and material responses to Becket. In previous chapters I have explored the network's flexibility as interpretive tool, capable of describing a variety of relationships (spatial, temporal, material, sensory) between entities of all kinds (human, nonhuman, sacred, divine). Becket's cult, I argue, draws particular attention to a range of intersecting spatial networks and connections, offering an opportunity to examine in more detail the ways that movement (of bodies, artefacts, texts) through topographical space forges enduring networks connecting places, people, and things. In the first section, I explore how Guernes uses relationships between multiple sacred spaces and mobile sacred bodies to construct and authenticate not only Becket's sainthood, but also the authority of

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Becket in Castile' in *The Cult of St Thomas Becket*, ed. by Webster and Gelin, pp. 133-45 (p. 135). For Joan's activities in Sicily, see Slocum, *The Cult of Thomas Becket*, pp. 73-74.

<sup>527</sup> On the rapid spread of cult sites and devotion to Becket in Normandy, see Elma Brenner, 'Thomas Becket and Leprosy in Normandy' in *The Cult of St Thomas Becket*, ed. by Webster and Gelin, pp. 81-93 (p. 81); Raymonde Foreville, 'Le Culte de saint Thomas Becket en Normandie: enquête sur les sanctuaires anciennement placés sous le vocable du martyr de Canterbury' in *Thomas Becket*, ed. by Foreville, pp. 135-52 (pp. 139-40); Jean Fournée, 'Les Lieux de culte de Saint Thomas Becket en Normandie', *Annales de Normandie*, 45.4 (1995), 377-92 (p. 378). The saint's popularity in Normandy is accentuated by his family associations with the region, see Raymonde Foreville, 'Mort et survie de saint Thomas Becket', *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale*, 14 (1971), 21-38 (p. 27). For the spread of relics, dedications, and visual material related to Becket in France, see Jean Bacquet, 'Les Sanctuaires dédiés à saint Thomas de Cantorbéry en Limousin', in *Thomas Becket*, ed. by Foreville, pp. 159-61; Catherine Brisac, 'Thomas Becket dans le vitrail français au début du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle', in *Thomas Becket*, ed. by Foreville, pp. 221-31. Becket's French popularity is again fuelled by his cross-Channel interconnection during his lifetime, as he forged links with a number of French abbeys and other religious institutions during his exile from England 1164-70, see Slocum, *The Cult of Thomas Becket*, p. 75. For French pilgrimage to Canterbury, and in particular that of Louis VII of France in 1179, who provided rich donations to the saint's tomb, see Webb, p. 50.

his own tale to participate in this sanctity. He draws attention to the ways in which the communication of Becket's sainthood is distributed across a network of architectural spaces and artefacts within Canterbury Cathedral that ensures Becket's death is understood as saintly, and that visitors to the church can access this sanctity. In contrast to the confessor saints examined elsewhere in this thesis, Becket's gruesome martyrdom affords his death, wounds, and blood a central role in his sainthood and cult development. This bloodshed, I argue, draws attention to the saintly body as a network of constituent parts with their own trajectories and associations, facilitating the expansion of Becket's presence beyond his corpse's boundaries. I then turn from Becket's martyrdom to the posthumous uses of his blood to transmit Becket's sanctity to his devotees in the form of relics, thereby extending the sacred space in which Becket's body has potency beyond Canterbury Cathedral. Indeed, throughout Guernes's text and Becket's wider cult, blood emerges as a substance particularly prone to forming new networks, by breaking down boundaries between inside and outside, dissolving distinctions between bodies, objects, and places, and encouraging identification between saint and supplicant. Ultimately, both text and material cult work not only to cultivate Becket's saintly identity, but also to incorporate into Becket's saintly networks the bodies of the faithful who visit the cathedral, encounter a reliquary, or read a life. Through an encounter with his blood these ordinary bodies are (however briefly) transformed, acquiring the capacity to participate in Becket's sanctity.

Becket's cult is marked not only by its rapid growth and geographical spread, but also by an unusual abundance of textual material composed soon after the saint's death. By the time of Becket's 1220 translation to his new shrine, he had been the focus of ten Latin biographies, two shrine miracle collections, two lengthy compilations, three vernacular lives in French and Old Norse, as well as being featured in a wealth of chronicle accounts and liturgies.<sup>528</sup> Many works were

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<sup>528</sup> In chronological order of composition, the Latin lives are: 1171-72, John of Salisbury, edited by James Robertson in *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket*, 7 vols (London: Longman, 1875-1885), II (1876), pp. 301-22; 1171-72, Edward Grim, in *Materials*, ed. by Robertson, II (1876), pp. 353-458; 1172-73, Anonymous II, in *Materials*, ed. by Robertson, IV (1879), pp. 80-144; c. 1172, William of Canterbury, in *Materials*, ed. by Robertson, I (1875), pp. 1-136; 1173-74, William FitzStephen, in *Materials*, ed. by Robertson, III (1873), pp. 13-154; 1173-74, Robert of Cricklade, lost *Vita*; 1176, Alan of Tewkesbury, in *Materials*, ed. by Robertson, II (1876), pp. 299-301, 323-52; 1176-77, Anonymous I, in *Materials*, ed. by Robertson, IV (1879), pp. 1-79; 1184-86, Herbert of Boseham, in

produced by those with Canterbury connections, including eyewitnesses to his life and death, and there was extensive intertextual borrowing.<sup>529</sup> Guernes's 6180-line *Thomas* (1172-74), composed in alexandrine stanzas, was part of a particularly dense burst of composition in the decade following the martyrdom.<sup>530</sup> Guernes's text is emblematic of the cross-Channel character of Becket's cult: a secular clerk from northern France, Guernes wrote in continental French, but produced the bulk of *Thomas* in Canterbury, and its extant manuscripts were all copied by Anglo-Norman scribes.<sup>531</sup> Guernes began writing soon after Becket's death in 1170, initially producing a close translation of the Latin *Vita* by Edward Grim (1171-72), an

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*Materials*, ed. by Robertson, III (1873), pp. 155-534. For the Latin lives' dating, see Michael Staunton, *Thomas Becket and His Biographers* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006), pp. 1-18. The Canterbury shrine miracle collections are by Benedict of Peterborough, working 1171-73 (*Miracula sancti Thomae Cantuariensis*, in *Materials*, ed. by Robertson, II (1876), pp. 1-298); and William of Canterbury, working 1172-77 (*Miraculorum gloriosi martyris Thomae*, in *Materials*, ed. by Robertson, I (1875), pp. 137-546. For details of the two miracle collections' dating and manuscripts, see Koopmans, pp. 126-29. In 1198-99, a compilation known as *Quadrilogus II* (*Materials*, ed. by Robertson, IV (1879), pp. 266-424) was produced by E(lias?) of Evesham from the lives by John, William of Canterbury, Alan, and Herbert, as well as the *Passio* by Benedict of Peterborough, which only survives in this compilation. The *Quadrilogus* was later expanded by Roger of Crowland (1212-13). For the dating and extensive manuscript transmission of the *Quadrilogus*, see Anne Duggan, *Thomas Becket: A Textual History of his Letters* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), pp. 205-06. The Old Norse life (c. 1200), translates Robert of Cricklade's lost *Vita*, and survives in several fragments, one of which is edited by C. R. Unger as *Thomas saga erkibyskups*, in *Heilagra manna sǫgur: fortaellinger og legender om hellige maend og kvinder* (Christiania: Bentzen, 1877), pp. 315-20. It is also incorporated into a later fourteenth-century Norse life, edited and translated by Eiríkur Magnússon, *Thómas saga erkibyskups: A Life of Archbishop Thomas Becket*, 2 vols (London: Longman, 1875-83). For discussion, see Margaret Orme, 'A Reconstruction of Robert of Cricklade's *Vita et Miracula S. Thomae Cantuariensis*', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 84 (1966), 379-98. For medieval chronicle accounts, see Michael Staunton, 'Thomas Becket in the Chronicles', in *The Cult of St Thomas*, ed. by Webster and Gelin, pp. 95-111. On Becket's early liturgies, see Slocum, *Liturgies in Honour of Thomas Becket* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), pp. 135-238. For details of the French lives, see below, nn. 530, 536.

<sup>529</sup> Staunton, *Thomas Becket*, pp. 4-5

<sup>530</sup> Guernes de Pont-Sainte-Maxence, *La Vie de saint Thomas de Canterbury*, ed. by Thomas, I, pp. 13-15. The text's composition in alexandrines, often associated with history writing and *chansons de geste*, rather than the octosyllabic couplets that dominate French hagiography, suggest how Guernes aligns his work with the truth claims of historiography as well as hagiography. See Guernes de Pont-Sainte-Maxence, *La Vie de saint Thomas Becket*, ed. by Emmanuel Walberg (Paris: Champion, 1964), p. xi.

<sup>531</sup> Indeed, Guernes asserts that his language is 'good' because of his French origins: 'Mis languages est bons, car en France fui nez' (6165). On Guernes's language use, see Thomas O'Donnell, 'Anglo-Norman Multiculturalism and Continental Standards in Guernes de Pont-Sainte-Maxence's *Vie de saint Thomas*', in *Conceptualizing Multilingualism in England, c. 800 - c. 1250*, ed. by Elizabeth M. Tyler (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), pp. 337-56 (p. 356). On the provenance of Guernes's manuscripts, see *La Vie de saint Thomas Becket*, ed. by Walberg, p. xiv.

eyewitness to Becket's murder who was himself injured in the attack.<sup>532</sup> Guernes writes that, dissatisfied with his source, he discarded this first attempt (ll. 146-60), although fragments of this first draft survive in one twelfth-century manuscript.<sup>533</sup> By 1172, Guernes was working on his second redaction, drawing on a range of sources including Grim's *Vita*, William of Canterbury's miracle collection (1172-77), Benedict of Peterborough's *Passio* (c. 1171), a number of letters and documents, as well as his own observations and collected oral testimonies.<sup>534</sup>

The relationship between Guernes's textual self-fashioning and the space of Canterbury Cathedral receives more extended discussion below, but it is worth emphasising from the outset the unusual prominence of vernacular works in the early formulation of Becket-as-saint. In contrast to the vernacular lives previously examined, which survive in a single or few copies, Guernes's second redaction is transmitted in seven manuscripts.<sup>535</sup> The production of a second twelfth-century life

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<sup>532</sup> Ian Short, 'An Early Draft of Guernes' *Vie de saint Thomas Becket*', *Medium Aevum*, 46 (1977), 20-34 (p. 21). Grim's *Vita* circulates independently in three complete manuscripts: London, British Library, MS Arundel 27 (thirteenth century); London, British Library, MS Cotton Vitellius C xii/2 (1350-1400, England); London, British Library, MS Cotton Vespasian E x (fourteenth century). It later circulated widely as part of the *Quadriologus* compilation, see Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, pp. 205-06. Grim describes his injury: 'Is etenim, [...] sancto archiepiscopo constanter adhæsit, et inter ulnas complexum tenuit, donec ipsa quam opposuit præcisa est' (*Vita*, Chapter 82, p. 437). Translated by Staunton as 'The same blow almost cut off the arm of this witness who, [...] steadfastly stood by the archbishop, and held him in his arms until his arm was struck', *The Lives of Thomas Becket* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), p. 202.

<sup>533</sup> Fragments of this first draft survive in one manuscript, London, Society of Antiquaries, MS 716, fols 1<sup>r</sup>-6<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>534</sup> For Guernes's sources, see Staunton, *Thomas Becket*, p. 28. William's collection survives in three lengthy and two partial manuscript copies: Évreux, Bibliothèque de la Ville, MS latin 77 (thirteenth century, Lyre); Cambridge, Corpus Christi College Library, MS 464 (fifteenth century); Montpellier, Bibliothèque interuniversitaire section médecine, MS 2 (late twelfth century, Clairvaux); Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, MS Cod. Theol. et phil. 4 654 (late twelfth century, Weissenau); Winchester, Winchester College, Fellows' Library, MS 4 (twelfth-thirteenth century). See Koopmans, pp. 212-13. Benedict's *Passio* survives as part of the *Quadriologus*, see n. 528 above. On Guernes's use of letters and documents, see Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, pp. 203-04. On the possible patronage of Guernes's text by the nuns of Barking Abbey, see O'Donnell, "'The ladies have made me quite fat'", pp. 101, 103.

<sup>535</sup> London, British Library, MS Additional 59616, fols 16<sup>r</sup>-130<sup>r</sup>; BL, MS Additional 70513, fols 9<sup>r</sup>-50<sup>v</sup>; London, British Library, MS Cotton Domitian A xi, fols 27<sup>r</sup>-45<sup>v</sup>; London, British Library, MS Harley 270, fols 1<sup>r</sup>-122<sup>v</sup>; Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson C. 641, fols 10<sup>r</sup>-13<sup>r</sup>; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 13513, fols 1<sup>r</sup>-98<sup>v</sup>; Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, MS 34. 6. Aug. 4o, fols 1<sup>r</sup>-83<sup>r</sup>. Moreover, his first draft was adapted back into Latin by an anonymous translator 1176-77, an unusual textual trajectory demonstrating this vernacular material's importance in Becket's cult formation. The Latin adaptation survives in a single manuscript, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de

in Anglo-Norman by Beneit de Saint Alban (1183-89), also surviving in seven manuscripts, is further testament to a medieval appetite for vernacular texts about Becket.<sup>536</sup> Guernes's text participates in a vibrant, multilingual textual culture in which vernacular composition occupies a significant role. Moreover, Guernes contributes to the first flush of composition about Becket, and begins writing before the saint's official 1173 canonisation. Becket was a controversial figure in his lifetime, an enemy of the king, but also resented by many within the church for his youthful secular excesses, his intransigent personality, and poor relationship with the Canterbury monks.<sup>537</sup> While his death rapidly produced claims of miracles on the part of the Canterbury locals, his early cult also faced resistance from important secular and ecclesiastical figures.<sup>538</sup> Indeed, in contrast to the texts dealt with in previous chapters, Guernes's *Thomas* is not concerned with the reformulation of an established saint and mature cult, but instead participates alongside Latin compositions in the inception of this contemporary saint's claim to sanctity. The newness of Becket's claim to sanctity enables exploration of how hagiographic

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France, MS latin 5615 (dated 1464), and is edited as Anonymous I, in *Materials*, ed. by Robertson, IV (1879), pp. 1-79.

<sup>536</sup> Beneit de Saint Alban, *La Vie de Thomas Becket par Beneit: poème anglo-normande du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, ed. by Börje Schlyter (Lund: Gleerup & Munksgaard, 1941). Beneit's 2125-line *Becket* is independent from Guernes's text, translating the lost Latin *Vita* by Robert of Cricklade. Beneit's life is composed in an unusual tail-rhyme scheme primarily associated with Middle English verse, see Rhiannon Purdie, *Anglicising Romance: Tail-Rhyme and Genre in Medieval English Literature* (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2008), pp. 42-48. For Beneit's dating and source, see Emmanuel Walberg, 'Date et source de la vie de Saint Thomas de Cantorbéry par Beneit, moine de Saint-Alban', *Romania*, 44 (1915-17), 407-26. Beneit's manuscripts, all by English scribes, are: Cambridge, Clare College, Fellows' Library, MS 12, fols 1<sup>r</sup>-4<sup>v</sup>, 230<sup>r</sup>-233<sup>v</sup> (thirteenth century); Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College Library, MS 123/60 (late twelfth century), pp. 1-4; BL, MS Additional 59616, fols 1<sup>r</sup>-15<sup>v</sup> (late thirteenth century); London, British Library, MS Cotton Vespasian B xiv, fols 95<sup>v</sup>-113<sup>r</sup> (1286-96); London, British Library, MS Cotton Vespasian D iv, fols 149<sup>r</sup>-171<sup>r</sup> (1200-1250); London, British Library, MS Harley 3775, fols 1<sup>r</sup>-14<sup>r</sup> (c. 1300); Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 902, fols 129<sup>v</sup>-135<sup>r</sup> (1250-1300). See *La Vie de Thomas Becket*, ed. by Schlyter, pp. 13-18; Short, 'The Patronage of Beneit's *Vie*', pp. 239-40. Becket is also the subject of another Anglo-Norman life (c. 1220-40) attributed to Matthew Paris, of which only four folios survive in what is now London, British Library, MS Loan 88. A facsimile of these illustrated leaves is published in Janet Backhouse and Christopher de Hamel, *The Becket Leaves* (London: British Library, 1988), and edited by Paul Meyer as *Fragments d'une vie de saint Thomas de Cantorbéry en vers accouplés* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1885).

<sup>537</sup> Marie-Pierre Gelin, 'The Cult of St Thomas in the Liturgy and Iconography of Christ Church, Canterbury', in *The Cult of St Thomas Becket*, ed. by Webster and Gelin, pp. 53-79 (p. 54); M. F. Hearn, 'Canterbury Cathedral and the Cult of Becket', *Art Bulletin*, 76.1 (1994), 19-52 (p. 47).

<sup>538</sup> Barlow, *Thomas Becket*, p. 248; Spencer, p. 38.

networks are produced as well as extended: his sainthood is conceived and communicated through a network of textual, architectural, visual, and material components. Guernes's text asserts the vital place of vernacular hagiography within this network, as one of the many intertwining textual and material constituent parts that collaborate to produce the faithful's experience of Becket-as-saint.

### Writing place, writing truth

Faced with the lack of obvious signs of extraordinary holiness during his lifetime, Becket's medieval hagiographers turned to the place and manner of his death as a decisive proof of sanctity.<sup>539</sup> The striking image of an archbishop cut down within the walls of his cathedral, a sanctified space where violence should be excluded, occupied a central position in representations of Becket's sanctity from the earliest manifestations of his cult.<sup>540</sup> The murder in the cathedral dominates Becket's medieval iconography, appearing as part of narrative sequences or standing alone in visual summation of Becket's saintly identity in everything from manuscript illustrations (Figures 26-27) to seals.<sup>541</sup> In these images, the positioning of Becket's violent death within the church's architectural surrounds, as well as its proximity to sacred objects such as the altar or cross, concisely communicate both the transgressive violation that his death represented and its sacred potential.

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<sup>539</sup> Backhouse and Hamel, pp. 5-6.

<sup>540</sup> On the importance of the martyrdom in iconography, see Marie-Madeleine Gauthier, 'Le Meurtre dans la cathédrale, thème iconographique médiéval', in *Thomas Becket*, ed. by Foreville, pp. 247-53; Arlette Larue, 'Enquête sur l'iconographie et le mobilier de Thomas Becket en Normandie', in *Thomas Becket*, ed. by Foreville, pp. 211-19.

<sup>541</sup> For Becket's visual material, see Tancred Borenius, *St. Thomas Becket in Art: With Forty-Four Plates and Five Illustrations in the Text* (London: Methuen, 1932), p. 74; on the use of the martyrdom on the seals of Canterbury archbishops, see Kay Brainerd Slocum, 'Martir quod Stillat Primatis ab Ore Sigillat: Sealed with the Blood of Becket', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 165 (2012), 61-88. For depictions in other media, see also Figures 34-36, discussed below, pp. 226-31.

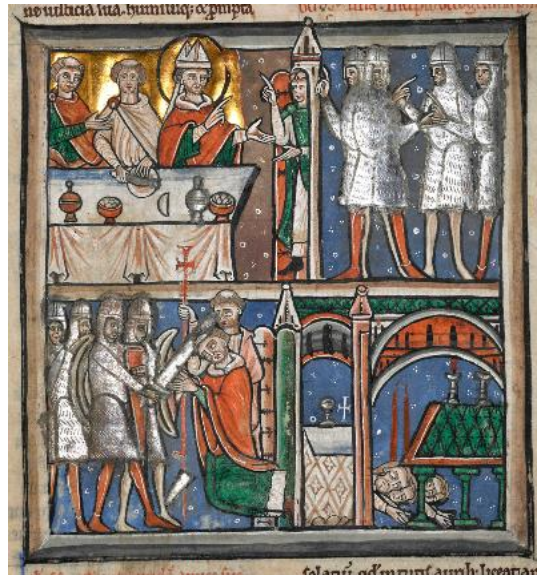


Figure 26. Alan of Tewkesbury, *Collectio epistolarum sancti Thome Cantuariensis*, the arrival of Becket's murderers, Becket's martyrdom, and veneration (or penance of knights) at his tomb, 1170, gold leaf and ink on parchment, London, British Library, Cotton Claudius B ii, fol. 341<sup>r</sup>.



Figure 27. Carrow Psalter, Becket's martyrdom, c. 1250, gold leaf and ink on parchment, Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, MS W.34, fol. 15<sup>v</sup>



A sense of the significance of the cathedral space pervades Guernes's *Thomas*. Surveying the treatment of Becket's death by his medieval biographers, Dawn Marie Hayes singles out both the frequency of Guernes's references to location and his particular sensitivity to the sacrilegious quality of violence on sanctified ground.<sup>542</sup> Guernes's depiction of the church building is particularly preoccupied with its physical and spiritual boundaries. His narration of Becket's martyrdom calls attention to the cathedral's physical limits and the entry-points that can both permit and prevent penetration into sacred space.<sup>543</sup> Urged by his monks to enter into the safety of sanctified ground (5386), Becket and his followers find the doorway bolted before them: 'il virent lur veie tutes parz estupee' (5450). When a monk places his hand on the bolt, it miraculously falls away from the door, allowing them entry (5451-55). The church building is a bounded space, whose threshold marks it off from the external world in both spatial and ideological terms: the inside of the church is a sacred space free from profane violence.<sup>544</sup> Yet as *Thomas*'s narration of Becket's movements indicates, if the limits of this sacred space are clearly articulated, these boundaries are also permeable. Indeed, once inside, Becket himself opens the doors to grant his attackers entry, thereby facilitating his martyrdom: 'Les uis ad il méesmes overt e desbarez' (5486). Becket's sainthood is predicated precisely on the breaching of the church's protective enclosure.<sup>545</sup>

The church, then, as a space that invites movement across thresholds, is foundational in the generation of Becket's sainthood. This portrayal of the church building resonates with Michel de Certeau's seminal exploration of the importance of place as means of organising and accessing hagiography. For Certeau, saints' lives revolve around a central, foundational place to which both saint and text constantly return through a series of displacements. The communication of the sacred truth of the saint's life, Certeau asserts, lies beyond discourse, but can be revealed through

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<sup>542</sup> *Body and Sacred Place in Medieval Europe, 1100-1389* (New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 83.

<sup>543</sup> On the medieval concern for the shifting porosity and rigidity of spatial boundaries, see Paul Zumthor, *La Mesure du monde: représentation de l'espace au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1993), p. 59.

<sup>544</sup> Zumthor suggests the ways that medieval buildings organise space by constructing an opposition between inside and outside, p. 91. On the medieval church as sacred space, see for example Pierre-André Sigal, 'Reliques, pèlerinages et miracles dans l'Église médiévale (XI<sup>e</sup>- XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle)', *Revue d'histoire de l'Église de France*, 76 (1990) 193-211 (p. 195)

<sup>545</sup> This contrasts sharply with the depiction of enclosure and interiority in *Audree*, discussed in Chapter Two, pp. 129-58.

this movement of saint and narrative to and from a place of foundation he dubs a *non-lieu*.<sup>546</sup> Certeau's *non-lieu* is 'un lieu qui n'en est pas un. Il renvoie les lecteurs à un "au-delà" qui n'est ni un ailleurs ni l'endroit même'.<sup>547</sup> Beyond the reach of human knowledge, a place that is not a place, the *non-lieu* eludes definition as wholly divine or concretely in the world, being neither one nor the other.<sup>548</sup> Certeau's reflections on hagiographic topographies are a useful complement to the theoretical models (ANT, Vital Materialism, Thing Theory) previously explored, calling attention to the specificities of how space (as opposed to other forms of entity) intervenes in relationships between the reader and the sacred. In particular, his assertion of the ways in which movement through space articulates a spiritual truth inaccessible to discourse illuminates Guernes's portrayal of how Becket's place of death produces and brings into being Becket's sanctity. Guernes associates the location of the saint's death in the holy space of the church with the special love God holds for Becket: 'Li pius Deus e li veir ot saint Thomas mult chier: | Ocis fu en bel liu e en un saint mustier' (131-32). God miraculously allows Becket entry to the church when his passage is barred and prevents his removal from the building by the murders who wish to drag him outside, in order that he may die in the most appropriate location (5440). The association of Becket's violent death with the sacred space of the church building assumes a foundational position in the assertion and development of his sanctity that is comparable to Certeau's formulation of the *non-lieu*. The location of Becket's death in the 'bel liu' of the church establishes and communicates without words the sacred truth of Becket's sanctity in a way that makes God's divine will accessible and knowable to the faithful. For Guernes, Becket-as-saint is not constructed in isolation, but in collaboration with the spiritual and material space of the church, foregrounding the capacity of the church building (a nonhuman, nonlinguistic, material entity) to articulate meaning and convey the sacred.<sup>549</sup>

The relationship of Guernes's text to material elements of Becket's cult also challenges some of Certeau's statements about spiritual space. For Certeau the *non-*

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<sup>546</sup> Certeau, pp. 286-87. I draw here on Emma Campbell's reading of Certeau in 'Epistemology of the Cloister: Knowledge, Identity and Place in Old French Saints' Lives', *Journal of Medieval Religious Cultures*, 36 (2010), 205-32 (pp. 206-07).

<sup>547</sup> Certeau, p. 287.

<sup>548</sup> Campbell, 'Epistemology of the Cloister', p. 209.

<sup>549</sup> Latour, *Pandora's Hope*, pp. 141-42.

*lieu* of spiritual space remains a rhetorical strategy, denoting inaccessibility and unknowability, resisting integration into the concrete material world.<sup>550</sup> In contrast, Guernes's engagement with sacred space is entangled in the tangible, concretely navigable topography of the Canterbury Cathedral building.<sup>551</sup> The details devoted to describing the methods of entry to church space by Becket and his murderers certainly reflect on idealised notions of inside-outside, sacred-profane space, but they also conjure a sense of the cathedral as a real, working building with a concrete existence. Becket's place of death is accessible to the faithful, as Guernes's prologue describes pilgrims' journeys to 'la seinte maison | De Seinte Ternité, u [Becket] suffri passïon' (118-19). Recalling Latour's assertion that the concern of religion is drawing attention to the proximate, rather than to transcendence beyond the world, Becket's spiritual places are concretely tangible to the faithful, fostering divine presence in the mundane world rather than inviting flight from earthly things.<sup>552</sup> While retaining Certeau's focus on the ways that movement through space (of both saint and text) allows access to sacred truth, in what follows I consider how the topographies of Becket's cult – in both text and ritual practice – not only structure the saint's life, but are also made available as material sacred spaces to both Canterbury pilgrims and readers of Guernes's text.

Guernes's depiction of the relationship between Becket's body and the fabric of the cathedral building particularly complicates Certeau's notions of central, foundational spiritual space. Although the body is not the focus of Certeau's study of hagiography, it is in many ways a necessary complement to Certeau's ideas about the *non-lieu*. The *non-lieu* is established as such through the saint's repeated displacement and return, a repeated movement that inflects our understanding of both sacred place and saintly body. The saint's body is inherently mobile, and it is

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<sup>550</sup> Campbell, 'Epistemology of the Cloister', p. 232.

<sup>551</sup> As Zumthor writes, sacred reality is connected to topographic authenticity, the medieval experience of the sacred entangled with rather than separate from a real topography, p. 56. Michael Camille emphasises the tangibility of medieval sacred spaces, foregrounding how they are navigated by the faithful's bodies, *Gothic Art: Visions and Revelations of the Medieval World* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1996), p. 27. For a similar focus on the pragmatic accessibility of sacred spaces, see Larry E. Shiner, 'Sacred Space, Profane Space, Human Space', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 40 (1972), 425-36 (pp. 427-28).

<sup>552</sup> Indeed, for Latour the network is a way of dispensing entirely with abstract divisions between inside and outside. As networks trace associations across such supposed boundaries, they do not have an inside or outside: the question is only if there are connections forged between two elements, 'On Actor-Network Theory', p. 372.

through this body's movement through space that the *non-lieu*'s sanctity is generated. The truth of sanctity is generated and expressed at the point where body and place meet. In Certeau's terms, the *non-lieu* is a singular point of reference, but Guernes's emphasis on the mobility of Becket's body, its ability to touch many places in life and death, allows for a proliferation of sacred sites. This proliferation can helpfully be figured as a form of spatial network, akin to the connections forged between sacred sites by Eloi's relic-collecting described in Chapter One.<sup>553</sup> This is drawn out in Guernes's descriptions of Henry II's penitential pilgrimage to Canterbury, in which the king's passage through the church is depicted as a movement through a network of overlapping places sanctified by contact with Becket's dead or dying body:

En l'glise est entrez; al martirie en ala,  
Dist i confiteor e le marbre baisa.  
Dunc ala a la tumbe, al martyr s'acorda  
(5958-60)

The text, along with the visitor to Canterbury, weaves through a network of overlapping sacred objects and spaces superimposed on one another: church, place of death, tomb.<sup>554</sup> The space of the church is a foundational centre for encounters with Becket's sanctity, but it is itself a porous, composite space composed of multiple sacred sites forged through the movement of Becket's living, dying, and dead body. Latour's observation that not only do all entities form part of networks, but that they are also all made up of networks holds true for the space of Canterbury Cathedral.<sup>555</sup> Guernes emphasises that the church is not a singular space, a point of departure and return, but a network of interconnected spiritual spaces that saint and pilgrim can move between, articulating Becket's sanctity and providing access to spiritual truth.

Guernes's descriptions of the cathedral underline that the church as sacred space has a material existence beyond the page. Moreover, his account of Henry's

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<sup>553</sup> Chapter One, pp. 71-74.

<sup>554</sup> As the cult develops throughout the thirteenth century this list of sacred locations is joined by the elaborate shrine, the purpose-built Trinity Chapel, and the corona reliquary purportedly housing the severed section of Becket's head, constructed for Becket's 1220 translation: Becket's body continues to be mobile after his death. On the reconstruction of Canterbury Cathedral and Becket's Chapel 1174-1220, see Eileen Robertson Hamer, 'Christ Church, Canterbury: The Spiritual Landscape of Pilgrimage', *Essays in Medieval Studies*, 7 (1990), 59-69.

<sup>555</sup> Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, p. 114.

pilgrimage emphasises that the sacred network of the church invites the entry and movement not only of the saint, but also of ordinary worshippers both within and beyond the text. In *Thomas* – as well as in cult practice – it is not only Becket who marks the stages of his life through a series of returns to the central place of Canterbury Cathedral. Rather, the church becomes a locus for the imitative movements of pilgrims, who mimic Becket's trajectory through space.<sup>556</sup> As in Henry's pilgrimage, veneration of a saint involves an imitative movement through a network of sacred places that stage encounters with Becket's body in life and death, as pilgrims follow the route the saint originally made through the sites of his death, entombment, and (post-1220) enshrinement.<sup>557</sup> This imitation of Becket's bodily movements by pilgrims perpetuates the process of departure and return that marks off Canterbury Cathedral as a spiritual space (in Certeau's terms a *non-lieu*) even after the saint's death. In the spiritual places of *Thomas*, the textual and the material, the imaginative and the concrete, are superimposed: the *non-lieu* within Guernes's text is interwoven with the tangible places experienced by the pilgrim. The repetition of Becket's trajectory through space acts to fix sacredness to these specific locations, locations in which the worshipper can be present, can touch, kiss, and interact with the stuff of Becket's life. Pilgrimage through the church as described by Guernes is a repetitive re-tracing of the spatial networks established by Becket's mobile body, continuously reiterating the sacred nature of these places.<sup>558</sup>

The movement of Becket's body through the church, then, traces enduring material and spatial networks that pilgrims seeking proximity to the saint can follow. This is especially true of Guernes's detailed narrative of Henry's pilgrimage. This imitative movement establishes the church as a space within which the pilgrim (in this case the atoning king) can insert his body into places once occupied by Becket, in which the worshipper can share in the saint's contact with the church building. In his movements through the important places of Becket's life (or rather, death) Henry recreates and surrounds himself with the physical narrative that establishes Becket's

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<sup>556</sup> Victor Turner, and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978), p. 33. For the route of pilgrims through Canterbury, see Nilson, p. 98.

<sup>557</sup> Anne F. Harris, 'Pilgrimage, Performance, and Stained Glass at Canterbury Cathedral', in *Art and Architecture of Late Medieval Pilgrimage*, ed. by Blick and Tekippe, I, pp. 243-82 (p. 272).

<sup>558</sup> As Latour writes, in order for networks to persist, they have to be traced anew by other moving agents, *Reassembling the Social*, p. 132.

sanctity, conjuring its presence through his movements. Henry completes his mimicry of Becket's movements by inserting his body into the saint's tomb and allowing himself to be beaten by the Canterbury monks, echoing the daily scourging to which Becket subjected his flesh: 'En une des fenestres de la tumberie | Le chief e les espaulles; le dos abandonad' (6004-05). Although the tomb was destroyed in the sixteenth century, surviving depictions in Canterbury's stained glass windows (see Figures 28-29), coupled with Guernes's description, indicate that it took the form of a protective stone sheath perforated with holes to allow worshippers closer access to the coffin within, a popular twelfth-century design also shared by Edward the Confessor's tomb from this period (see Figures 17-20).<sup>559</sup> The tomb's design holds in tension the need to shield Becket's body from hostile figures, to render it inaccessible and enclosed, and the pilgrim's desire for physical closeness to the saint.<sup>560</sup> *Thomas* lingers less on the bodily proximity this tomb enables than on the entry of Henry into this shared sacred space. In Guernes's depiction of Henry's penitential journey to and through Canterbury Cathedral, an encounter with Becket is conjured not through direct contact with the body, but through retracing the saint's movement through sacred spatial networks, and through shared enclosure within the body's architectural surrounds.

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<sup>559</sup> For the destruction of Becket's shrine and tomb at Canterbury in 1538 see John Butler, *The Quest for Becket's Bones: The Mystery of the Relics of St Thomas Becket of Canterbury* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), pp. 114-15. For the tomb's design see Lamia, 'The Cross and the Crown', pp. 42, 51; William Urry, 'Some Notes on the Two Resting Places of St Thomas Becket at Canterbury', in *Thomas Becket*, ed. by Foreville, pp. 195-209 (p. 196). On the *foramina* style of tomb in English shrines, see Crook, *English Medieval Shrines*, pp. 192-94; and discussion in Chapter Two, pp. 169-77. This style of tomb replicates the rebuilt form of Christ's tomb in the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, suggesting a resonance between the space of Becket's tomb and this distant holy place, as well as between the saint and Christ himself, Tim Tatton-Brown, 'Canterbury and the Architecture of Pilgrimage Shrines in England', in *Pilgrimage*, ed. by Morris and Roberts, pp. 90-107 (p. 94). On the Holy Sepulchre tomb, see Stephen Lamia, 'Souvenir, Synaesthesia, and the *sepulchrum Domini*: Sensory Stimuli as Memory Stratagems', in *Memory and the Medieval Tomb*, ed. by Elizabeth Valdez del Alamo and Carol Stamatis Pendergast (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 19-41 (p. 22).

<sup>560</sup> On pilgrims' desire for proximity to relics, see Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, p. 87; Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims*, p. 89.

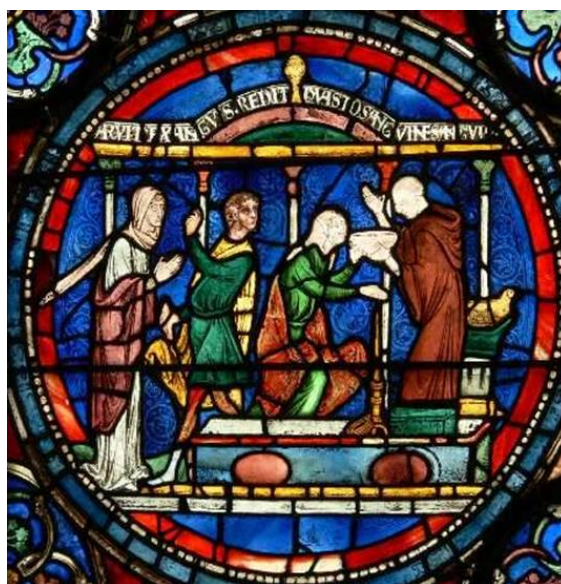


Figure 28. Ethelreda imbibing Becket's blood at his tomb, *c.* 1200-*c.* 1220, stained glass, Trinity Chapel, north ambulatory Becket miracle window n.iv, Canterbury Cathedral, Canterbury.

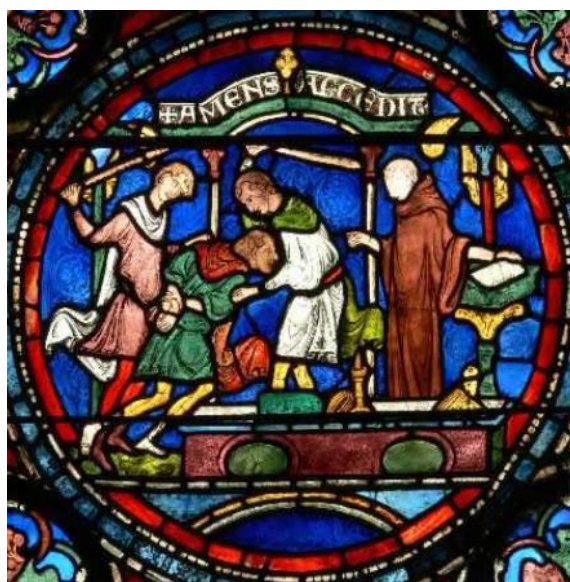


Figure 29. Henry of Fordwich, brought to Becket's tomb, *c.* 1200-*c.* 1220, stained glass, Trinity Chapel, north ambulatory Becket miracle window n.iv, Canterbury Cathedral, Canterbury.

The importance of shared spatial enclosure, the incorporation of the faithful body into the spaces of the saint, is also explored in the later development of Becket's places of veneration in the cathedral. After fire damage in 1174, Canterbury Cathedral underwent a series of reconstructive efforts that lasted into the thirteenth century.<sup>561</sup> One of the main focuses of the renovations was the construction of a grand chapel dedicated to Becket, known today as the Trinity Chapel. The chapel housed an extravagant new shrine for Becket's body and was surrounded by stained glass illustrating his posthumous miracles. On the fiftieth anniversary of his death, Becket's body was translated from the crypt tomb to its new resting place in the chapel.<sup>562</sup> This shrine was likewise destroyed in the Reformation, but surviving visual and textual evidence indicates that it took the form of a large golden, jewelled reliquary on a raised stone platform, indicating a move both towards a grander display of the relics and a greater physical distance between holy body and pilgrim in line with other thirteenth-century fashions in shrine building.<sup>563</sup> The surviving elements of the chapel (the architectural surrounds, the stained glass) suggest that sacred encounters with Becket can be directed away from simple proximity to his body towards a network of sacred spaces that enclose the pilgrim. The pilgrim's encounter with the shrine would be surrounded, visually and physically, by the narratives of miracles performed by Becket at his twelfth-century tomb depicted in stained glass. These windows were glazed in the early thirteenth century and narrate in visual form the miracles recorded by Benedict of Peterborough and William of Canterbury.<sup>564</sup> The stained glass represents Becket's tomb, the container for his

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<sup>561</sup> On the reconstruction of the Cathedral and Chapel (1174-1220), see Richard Eales, 'The Political Setting of the Becket Translation of 1220', in *Martyrs and Martyrologies*, ed. by Diana Wood, Studies in Church History, 30 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), pp. 127-39 (p. 129).

<sup>562</sup> A narrative of Becket's translation in French prose by the monk John of Canterbury, the *Polistorie del Eglise de Christ de Caunterbyre* (1314), survives in a single Canterbury manuscript, London, British Library, MS Harley 636. The *Polistorie* is unedited, but the sections related to Becket's translation are transcribed in Arthur James Mason, *What Became of the Bones of St Thomas? A Contribution to his Fifteenth Jubilee* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1920), pp. 69-73.

<sup>563</sup> Sarah Blick, 'Reconstructing the Shrine of St Thomas Becket, Canterbury Cathedral', in *Art and Architecture of Late Medieval Pilgrimage*, ed. by Blick and Tekippe, I, pp. 405-41 (pp. 424-28); Crook, *English Medieval Shrines*, pp. 216-27; Malo, p. 142.

<sup>564</sup> Madeline Harrison Caviness's comprehensive study of the windows explores the complexities of assigning a precise date to the windows. She suggests that the iconographic plan could date as early as 1183, and that partial glazing may have begun c. 1200, although building work was subsequently halted by the papal interdict against the English church 1207-13, and the windows may not have been completely finished by Becket's 1220 translation. See *The Windows of Christ Church Cathedral, Canterbury*, Corpus Vitrearum



body, again and again, a repeated visual return to this conjunction of body and place that is reminiscent of Certeau's foundational return (Figures 28-29). Moreover, through the windows' jewel-like colours, the church becomes a reliquary-like container that envelops pilgrims' bodies in the same space as Becket's body.<sup>565</sup> These windows enclose the worshipper, suggesting the potential miracles to be performed on the pilgrim's own body. As in Guernes's depiction of Henry's penitence, there is an emphasis on expressing worship as enclosure within sacred space. Sainly presence is not concentrated exclusively in Becket's corpse, but distributed across a dense network of sacred spaces and objects within the church. Entry into the church space enables the enactment of sanctity and the fulfilment of worship.

The chapel windows emphasise the importance of place in Becket's sanctity, while also drawing attention to the ways in which his cult interweaves sacred space – and worshippers' bodies – with textual interventions. The translation of Becket's miracles into visual form in these windows dramatizes the intertwining of text, place, and body in the establishment of Becket's cult.<sup>566</sup> The images are narrative adaptations of Benedict's and William's miracle texts; moreover, many contain Latin captions that explain the images' content. Anne F. Harris has argued that these inscriptions' function is primarily formal, the letters acting as signs to denote and appropriate the authority of text rather than to legibly convey linguistic content.<sup>567</sup> Yet Madeleine Harrison Caviness's comprehensive study of the Canterbury windows complicates this strictly symbolic interpretation. Caviness emphasises the inscriptions' poetic qualities: largely single lines of 13-16 syllables with internal rhymes, those captions which survive display a deliberate poetic form that suggests they were intended to be read and understood by at least some viewers.<sup>568</sup> The images encircling the chapel, which are founded on textual accounts, thus incorporate new textual elements to

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Medii Aevi, Great Britain II (London: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 163-64; *The Early Stained Glass of Canterbury Cathedral, circa 1175-1220* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 98.

<sup>565</sup> Harris, pp. 254, 265; Hearn, p. 44; Gameson, p. 83.

<sup>566</sup> On the movement between text and image as a form of translation, see Mills, *Seeing Sodomy*, p. 18. On the ways in which medieval images mediate knowledge in relation to writing, see Lawrence G. Duggan, 'Was Art Really the "Book of the Illiterate"?', *Word & Image*, 5.3 (1989), 227-51 (p. 244).

<sup>567</sup> Harris, pp. 260-61.

<sup>568</sup> Caviness, *The Windows of Christ Church Cathedral*, p. 159. Benedict also probably composed the liturgy for Becket's feast day, further heightening the links between text, saint, and sacred space, Gelin, p. 67.

convey a narrative of Becket's power. In some panels, word and place seem to merge completely: witness Figures 28 and 29, in which the inscriptions are incorporated into the architectural surround of the miracle depicted.<sup>569</sup> The miracle enacted on the pilgrim's body is encircled and communicated by both spiritual space and poetic text.

This merging of body, place, and text in the windows' presentation of the tomb is also of key concern in *Thomas*. Guernes explicitly engages with the notion of sacred space as a privileged vehicle for communicating truth in a way that resonates with Certeau's characterisation of the *non-lieu*. The cathedral space is central not only to the construction of the saint, but also for Guernes's textual authority. *Thomas* is concerned throughout with questions of the veracity and authenticity of hagiographic production. Guernes expounds on his compositional processes in his prologue and epilogue, proclaiming his narrative's definitive accuracy:

E ço sacent tuit cil qui del saint traitié unt,

U romanz u latin, e cest chemin ne vunt:

U el diënt que jo contre verité sunt.

(6173-75)

Although many versions of this tale exist, variation is dismissed in favour of asserting the univocal integrity of the truth of Becket's life and death – a truth conveyed uniquely by *Thomas*. Guernes's assertion that his text conveys the truth better than other French or Latin ('romanz u latin') account points to the unusual ways in which he positions his textual authority. *Thomas* is the only life featured in this thesis that does not self-consciously draw attention to its nature as a translation from Latin. Guernes chooses to let his acts of translation pass in silence, framing himself throughout as a composer and collector of information rather than as a translator.

Guernes's rejection of the role of translator of Latin sources is symptomatic of a more pervasive anxiety within *Thomas* about the potential failure of written texts to provide access to spiritual truth without distortion.<sup>570</sup> As noted above,

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<sup>569</sup> Both windows depict miracles from Benedict's *Miracula*. Figure 28 depicts the healing of a woman named Etheldreda suffering from fever, Benedict, *Miracula*, Book I, Chapter 22. Figure 29 illustrates the healing of Henry of Fordwich from madness, II. 13.

<sup>570</sup> Witness Becket's reluctance to commit his agreement with the king to writing, or the manipulation employed in the documents condemning him circulated by royal supporters

Guernes discards his first attempt at composition, which draws on reports prepared by others, dismissing his draft as inaccurate (146). Throughout, narrative authority and authenticity are the preserve not of writing, but of an alternative system of presence and proximity. Guernes's characterisation of *Thomas's* definitive version of Becket's life as a 'chemin' not travelled by dissenting accounts (6174) recalls the association of narrative and movement in Certeau's claim that the textual 'géographie du sacré' is traversed by saint and hagiographer.<sup>571</sup> The transformation of knowledge involved in committing a saint's life to writing may, for Guernes, open that knowledge up to distortion and inaccuracy, yet, especially with regard to his own work, he affirms text's capacity to lead to spiritual truth through this language of movement through space. If Guernes's tactics of textual legitimation resonate with Certeau's thinking, it is important to reiterate that Guernes is concerned not only with rhetorical space, but with the tangible topography of Canterbury. The foundation of Guernes's claim to transmit the whole and accurate truth is his own journey to, and presence in, the central places that structure Becket's life and death.<sup>572</sup> He succeeds in accessing truth only once he travels to Canterbury from his native France to listen to oral eyewitness accounts: 'A Cantorbire alai, la verité oï' (147). Canterbury is the source of *Thomas's* authority: 'A Cantorbire fu e faiz e amendez; | N'i ad mis un sul mot que ne seit veritez' (6162-63). Accurate information can only be accessed through a movement towards sacred space, an action that, as per Certeau, situates the communication of truth outside discourse (or at least outside of writing) and aligns it instead with the central places of the saint's life. The authority of Guernes's text rests not on linguistic translation from Latin sources, but on the author's physical *translatio* through space. Movement through sacred space not only provides the originary foundation for Becket's sanctity, but also guarantees the truth-value of Guernes's text.

Indeed the poet's rejection of the textual sources he receives at a distance in favour of travel to the central places of Becket's life foregrounds the ways in which, for Guernes, interaction with the material space of the saint's cult forms the bedrock

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(1011-15, 2781-95); O'Donnell, 'Anglo-Norman Multiculturalism and Continental Standards', p. 349.

<sup>571</sup> Certeau, p. 281.

<sup>572</sup> Travel can be figured as a devotional, spiritual act in its own right in the Middle Ages, Caroline Prud'homme, *Le Discours sur le voyage chez les écrivains de la fin du Moyen Âge* (Paris: Champion, 2012), p. 15.

of an experience of his sainthood. The public aspect of sacred space and the poet's ability to interact with the landscape and sacred spaces that inform his work is most striking in Guernes's repeated performance of his text at the site of Becket's tomb:

Guernes li Clers del Punt fine ici sun sermon  
 Del martir saint Thomas e de sa passiun;  
 E mainte feiz le list a la tumbé al barun.  
 Ci n'a mis un sul mot se la verité nun.  
 (6156-59)

This performance encapsulates the ways in which text and place interact throughout Becket's cult to bring his sanctity into being and communicate his sainthood to the faithful. The experience of Guernes's text is defined by his position within sacred church space and in proximity to the tomb, while the pilgrims who attend Becket's tomb have their experience of this sacred site mediated and explicated through the words of *Thomas*.<sup>573</sup> Guernes traces Becket's mobile trajectory through sacred space, re-enacting the saint's participation in sacred spatial networks in the same manner as Henry and other pilgrims within the text. The physical relocation of Guernes's body as he journeys to Canterbury and moves around the cathedral is not only a means to access spiritual truth, but also functions as a replication of the movement of Becket's body within a tangible sacred space. Text and space mutually construct each other even as they work together to establish Becket's sanctity.

The reading aloud of *Thomas* at Becket's tomb also enlists the human bodies of the author and his audience in the mediation of place, text, and spiritual truth. As Thomas O'Donnell has observed, the tomb-performance allows Guernes to adopt for his own written text the authority that he assigns to orality and proximity, circumventing his suspicion of the written word's distortion.<sup>574</sup> Furthermore, Guernes imagines encounters with his text as a primarily oral-aural experience. He suggests that his audience will experience his text aurally, will 'esculter' and 'oïr' his tale (141-42), and that in listening they will access truth: 'E ço sacent tuit cil qui ceste vie orrunt | Que pure verité par tut oïr purrunt' (6171-72). He also positions himself as a listener, whose research into the truth of Becket's life is centred on

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<sup>573</sup> This intersection of shrine and text is not unique to Becket. Bartlett discusses some of the myriad ways text and place come together at saints' shrines in the Middle Ages, including the recording of miracles in a book kept at the site of the shrine, the recitation of miracles at the shrine, the display of vernacular miracles on the walls of the shrine, p. 561.

<sup>574</sup> O'Donnell, 'Anglo-Norman Multiculturalism and Continental Standards', p. 349.

hearing others speak: ‘la verité oï’ (147). Guernes’s need for physical proximity to the people who encountered Becket in his lifetime and the places where this life unfurled complicates Certeau’s conceptions of writing place by insisting on an unwritten truth communicated through direct experience. *Thomas*’s authority is marked off by opposing moments of transfer between forms: by Guernes’s recording in writing of the oral information he collects and the parallel restoration of this written report to spoken form. The spiritual authority established by proximity to sacred places is complemented by an emphasis on proximity to bodies: the body of Becket, but also the speaking and listening bodies of poet, informant, and audience. Indeed, Becket’s tomb is a place where physical location is bound to bodily presence, a place where sacrality relies on the saintly body it encloses, a space that gestures continually to the death of the saint it celebrates. The fact that Guernes’s communication of sanctity to other worshippers is authenticated by his physical presence at the resting place of Becket’s body emphasises the changeable, shifting relationship between place and body.

In Becket’s cult, then, the sacred is articulated through a dense, overlapping network of space, body, and text. By centring the truth-value of his text on the intertwining of bodily presence and spiritual space, Guernes foregrounds the material space of the church and its sacred sites, as well as the movement of the body through this mediating space as the repository and vehicle for sacred truth. In this way, Guernes presents his written text as a uniquely privileged vehicle of accuracy, validated by the poet’s presence within sacred space, and his oral interaction with eyewitnesses to Becket’s life. As Guernes reads out *Thomas* at the saint’s tomb, he participates in this transmission of sanctity through body, place, and speech, while also enabling his listeners to participate in their turn. His performance acts as a fulcrum between page and speech, his body – the eyes that read and the mouth that forms the words – transmitting the text to his audience, whose own bodies are implicated as they listen to his words. Guernes’s performance suggests that reading his text can enable mediated access to sacred space, even at a distance, without the physical travel of the reader. Through *Thomas*, the reader is also able to trace the spatial, material, spiritual networks that form the church space, replicating saintly movement and gaining access to Becket.

## Body and church

The exploration in both *Thomas* and Becket's material cult of the ways in which the church building encourages the movement of saint, pilgrims, and text draws attention to the shifting relationships between body and space. This intermingling of place and body is complicated by the multivalent nature of the church in medieval thought: it is at once a building, an institution, a symbolic and corporate body. In this section I examine more closely how, by drawing on these rich associations, Becket's cult fosters not only an experience of proximity with the saint within the church space, but also an identification between Becket and church that allows the fabric of the cathedral building to manifest the saint.

The correspondence between Becket and church is in part tied to the church as an institution, as Becket comes to embody and stand in for the church and its values – in particular its resistance to royal authority.<sup>575</sup> Becket dies defending the church: 'pur sa mere iglise fu ocis par martyre' (14). Just as the placement of Becket's death within the church building lends that death the quality of martyrdom, so too it lends Becket's martyrdom the symbolic quality of an attack on the church's wider values and ideology.<sup>576</sup> The violence committed against Becket's body is experienced as a trauma by the church, which is 'hunie e vïolee' by his murder (5691). Indeed, the church is anthropomorphised throughout *Thomas*, taking on a life of its own as a thinking, feeling subject that weeps (1600), feels sorrow (3262), and suffers (3373). This personification is a reminder of the church's multivalent meanings and its capacity to evoke associations with a diverse range of bodies. The church, which is already grammatically feminine, is also referred to metaphorically in gendered terms as 'mere iglise' (3044, 3166, 3371, 3471, 4873) or as the bride of Christ (3128, 3164, 4833).<sup>577</sup> This characterisation of the church (Ecclesia) as a woman, God's mother or spouse, is a commonplace medieval image whose usage draws attention to the ways in which medieval sacred and divine bodies might resist

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<sup>575</sup> Anne J. Duggan, 'The Cult of St. Thomas Becket in the Thirteenth Century', in *St. Thomas Cantilupe, Bishop of Hereford: Essays in his Honour*, ed. by Meryl Jancey (Hereford: Friends of Hereford Cathedral, 1982), pp. 21-44 (pp. 24, 30).

<sup>576</sup> Hayes, *Body and Sacred Place*, p. 93.

<sup>577</sup> The characterisation of the church as maternal figure is heightened even further in Beneit's *Becket*, which describes the murderers killing their father (Becket) in the womb of their mother (the church): 'dedens le ventre lur mere | unt a tort occiz lur pere' (*Becket*, 2044-45).

strict binary definitions of gender.<sup>578</sup> Ecclesia can be read not only as Christ's bride, but also as his body.<sup>579</sup> As Jo Spreadbury notes, the association of male and female bodies through the figure of Ecclesia did not necessarily trouble the medieval imagination.<sup>580</sup> The twelfth century saw a flowering of imagery depicting Christ as a maternal figure in spiritual writing.<sup>581</sup> In this tradition, the pains of childbirth and a mother's care are intertwined with the blood-soaked passion of Christ and the nourishment of the community this sacrifice provides, both forms of suffering which are characterised by self-sacrifice, generative potential, and a nurturing tenderness.<sup>582</sup> The figure of Ecclesia crystallises this association of Christ, maternity, and blood: she is often depicted in visual art as being born from Christ's wounded side, a product of his body and an analogue for his blood.<sup>583</sup> She is also the recipient of this blood, as she collects this precious liquid in a chalice.<sup>584</sup> Throughout Becket's hagiography his biographers nurture a comparison between the saint and Christ, and *Thomas* is no exception to this trend.<sup>585</sup> The association of Becket's body with the church, and the parallel association of the church with the female body (particularly the maternal body), encourages a comparison between saint and Christ, Becket's murder and Christ's passion, emphasising the redemptive, communal, Christ-like aspect of the saint's death.

Guernes emphasises that Becket's martyrdom not only conflates the saint with the church as institution or symbolic body, but also with the fabric of the church building itself. The text draws on architectural metaphors of Becket-as-church to again encourage identification between the saint and Christ. Becket is figured in architectural terms, as 'le bon fundement' for God to build on (335), a throne for

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<sup>578</sup> Jo Spreadbury, 'The Gender of the Church: The Female Image of *Ecclesia* in the Middle Ages', in *Gender and Christian Religion*, ed. by R. N. Swanson, Studies in Church History, 34 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1998), pp. 93-103 (p. 94).

<sup>579</sup> Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, p. 93.

<sup>580</sup> Spreadbury, p. 94.

<sup>581</sup> This imagery was particularly prevalent amongst the Cistercians, with whom Becket had an extended association during his period of exile. See Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press: 1982), pp. 112, 147. For a critique of Bynum's binary, anatomical depiction of gender, see Kathleen Biddick, 'Genders, Bodies, Borders: Technologies of the Visible', *Speculum*, 68 (1993), 389-418.

<sup>582</sup> Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, p. 131.

<sup>583</sup> Bettina Bildhauer, 'Blood in Medieval Cultures', *History Compass*, 4.6 (2006), 1049-59 (p. 1051).

<sup>584</sup> Spreadbury, p. 94.

<sup>585</sup> Hayes, *Body and Sacred Place*, p. 78; Staunton, *Thomas Becket*, p. 193.

God, and a container in which God may reside (1251).<sup>586</sup> This metaphor suggests the ways that Becket's body can be understood in nonhuman terms, as a foundation, seat, or vessel.<sup>587</sup> The metaphor of Becket as a foundation reinforces connections between the saint and Christ, by recalling an exegetical tradition that casts Christ as the foundation stone of the temple.<sup>588</sup> Indeed, throughout the Middle Ages, allegorical readings of the church building exploited this tradition to draw connections between the church's material fabric and the symbolic church as a corporate body: if Christ is the foundation, then each worshipper is a component in the church's construction.<sup>589</sup> The church encompasses all Christian believers, who are absorbed as members of this simultaneously unified and composite body.<sup>590</sup> The conflation of Christ, saint, and church is enacted most strikingly at the moment of Becket's martyrdom, as his murderers find themselves unable to drag the archbishop away from the pillar to which he has attached himself:

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<sup>586</sup> This imagery is commonplace in Becket hagiography, notably drawn on by Stephen Langton in his 1220 Translation liturgy, Duggan, 'The Cult of St. Thomas Becket', p. 40.

<sup>587</sup> On saints as vessels for the divine, see discussion in Chapters Two and Four, pp. 159-61 and 264-67.

<sup>588</sup> An influential medieval example of this tradition is Bede's reading of the temple of Solomon, in which Bede interprets the literal stone of the temple as a figure for Christ 'tanquam lapidis angularis singulariter electi, et pretiosi, in fundamento fundavi' (*De templo Salomonis liber*, *Patrologia Latina*, 91 (1862), cols 735-898 (Chapter 1, col. 738)). Translated by Seán Connolly as 'as the uniquely chosen and precious cornerstone laid in the foundation' (*On the Temple* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1995), p. 5). The interpretation of Christ as foundation stone has its roots in the Bible, in which Christ is described as a foundation ('Fundamentum' (1 Corinthians 3. 11)), and corner stone ('angulari lapide' (Ephesians 2. 20)). On this tradition, see Christiania Whitehead, *Castles of the Mind: A Study of Medieval Architectural Allegory* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), p. 47.

<sup>589</sup> Thus, Bede writes, the temple is not only a figure for Christ, but also 'nostri autem tanquam lapidum vivorum, superaedificatorum super fundamentum [...] hoc est super ipsum Dominum' (*De templo*, 1, col. 738). Translated by Connolly as 'of us as the living stones built upon the foundation [...] i.e. on the Lord himself' (*On the Temple*, pp. 5-6). Again Bede draws closely on biblical imagery, see Ephesians 2. 19-22; 1 Peter 2. 5. For discussion, see Whitehead, pp. 19, 52-54.

<sup>590</sup> Another image developed from biblical roots: 1 Corinthians 12. 12-13, 'Sicut enim corpus unum est, et membra habet multa, omnia autem membra corporis cum sint multa, unum tamen corpus sunt: ita et Christus. Etenim in uno Spiritu omnes nos in unum corpus baptizati sumus' ('For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body'). For discussion, see Bettina Bildhauer, 'Medieval European Conceptions of Blood: Truth and Human Integrity', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 19 (2013), 57-76 (p. 58); Jacques le Goff, 'Head or Heart? The Political Uses of Body Metaphors', in *Fragments for a History of the Human Body, Part Three*, ed. by Michel Feher, Ramona Naddaff, and Nadia Tazi (New York: Urzone, 1989), pp. 12-27 (p. 12).



Car la hors le voleient u oscire u lier.  
 Mais del pilier nel porent oster ne esluignier.  
 Car sainz Thomas s'esteit apuiez al Piler  
 Qui suffri mort en cruiz pur s'iglise estorer;  
 Ne l'en pœit nuls huem esluignier ne sevrer.  
 Mais ore en covenait un sul a mort livrer  
 Al piler del mustier, pur le pueple salver.  
 (5549-55)

This episode presents a complex illustration of the overlapping imagery of building, institution, body, and community.<sup>591</sup> Becket's death is modelled on and reflects Christ's crucifixion; the saint is sacrificed within the physical church building to offer salvation for the members of the Christian church that was itself founded through Christ's death.<sup>592</sup> Becket is supported in his triumphant death by a pillar that is both part of the material structure of the church he dies for and a symbol of the God he imitates. In medieval allegories of the church building, pillars are figured variously as the apostles, saints, and bishops, who build on Christ's foundation to support the church; Guernes asserts that this venerable holy company is one that Becket joins following his death.<sup>593</sup> Moreover, in Becket's refusal to be separated from this pillar, saint and God seem to fuse with the fabric of the building in a move that makes the architectural metaphor concrete. At the moment of his death, Becket

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<sup>591</sup> Here Guernes significantly expands the architectural and Christological implications of Becket's death near the church pillar as recounted in Grim's *Vita*: 'Sed cum facile non posset a columna moveri, unum ex ipsis acrius insistentem et accedentem propius a se repulit' (Grim, *Vita*, Chapter 81, p. 436); 'But since he could not easily be moved from the pillar, one of them attached himself and applied himself particularly fiercely' (Staunton, *The Lives of Thomas Becket*, p. 202.).

<sup>592</sup> Dawn Marie Hayes, 'Body as Champion of Church Authority and Sacred Place: The Murder of Thomas Becket', in 'A Great Effusion of Blood?': *Interpreting Medieval Violence*, ed. by Mark D. Meyerson, Daniel Tiery, and Oren Falk (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), pp. 190-215 (p. 193).

<sup>593</sup> For example, Bede interprets the pillars of the temple as variously 'Apostolos namque et doctors cunctos spirituales' ('the apostles and all spiritual teachers' (18, col. 779; trans. by Connolly, p. 74); Saints Paul (18, col. 780) and Stephen (20, col. 739). In the twelfth century, Honorius Augustodunensis's comprehensive allegorical reading of the church building and its practices casts the pillars as bishops: 'Columnae, quae domum fulciunt, sunt episcopi, qui machinam Ecclesiae vitae rectitudine in alta suspendunt' (*De gemma animae, Patrologia Latina*, 172 (1895), cols 541-738 (l. 131, col. 586). Translated by Whitehead as 'The columns that support the house are the bishops, who maintain the machinery of church life at a high level', p. 277, n. 24.

seems to be absorbed into the church fabric, suggesting that his saintly network incorporates nonhuman entities that intermingle with his own human flesh.<sup>594</sup>

The intermingling of saint and church is most acute at the moment of the martyrdom itself. Becket's murder is a transgression of the secure boundaries of both place and body: not only does it violate the sanctity of church space, but it also challenges the supposed inviolability of clerical bodies. Clergy were forbidden from spilling blood and exempt from punishments leading to the spilling of their blood, making the secular violence done to Becket's body especially shocking.<sup>595</sup> Indeed, one of the key points of discord in Becket and Henry II's dispute rested on the secular court's ability to impose this sort of punitive bloodshed on criminal clergy.<sup>596</sup> The relationship between body and church and its connection to Becket's person finds a correlative in the preoccupation displayed throughout *Thomas* with the integrity of the saintly body and the violation of that integrity. The wounds inflicted on Becket are expressed as a violation of boundaries, an externalisation of the inner matter of Becket's body that mirrors the breaching of the non-violent space of the church. The wounds are targeted at his head: the first severs his crown, breaking open his skull and exposing his brain matter (5585-86, 5595). As Becket lies dead on the cathedral floor, one attacker uses his sword to further excavate his skull, spattering blood and brains on the ground (5633-34). The spilled blood underscores the fact that the body has an inside and an outside, that it is a porous container that can be breached.<sup>597</sup> Moreover, Guernes's description emphasises that Becket's body not only participates in the cathedral's spatial networks, but is also itself a network formed of constituent parts (skull, blood, brains). The martyrdom exposes Becket's body as a composite collection of parts liable to overflow its boundaries, just like the church it represents.

The elements of blood, brains, and skull that make up the saint's bodily network have their own trajectories and associations, endowing Becket's body with a broad range of significations.<sup>598</sup> In particular, the focus of Becket's wounds on his head acquires a powerful symbolism. After Becket's 1220 translation, a fragment of

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<sup>594</sup> See Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, p. 112.

<sup>595</sup> Barlow, *Thomas Becket*, p. 91; Hugh M. Thomas, 'Shame, Masculinity, and the Death of Thomas Becket', *Speculum*, 87 (2012), 1050-88 (p. 1070).

<sup>596</sup> Thomas, p. 1071.

<sup>597</sup> On medieval conceptions of the bounded body, see Bildhauer, *Medieval Blood*, p. 7.

<sup>598</sup> See Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, p. 112.

his skull was displayed separately from the rest of his body in a reliquary in the corona of Trinity Chapel, emphasising the ongoing flexibility of Becket's bodily boundaries, as well as the particular prominence of this body part in the communication of his sanctity.<sup>599</sup> Guernes particularly plays on the resonances of the metaphor of priests as Christ's deputies on Earth and, by extension, as head of the church-as-body (5560).<sup>600</sup> The head is the locus of priestly consecration; it also articulates the priest's role as head of the church and representative of Christ on earth.<sup>601</sup> Guernes's frequent references to the crowning of the clergy by the church (that is, through the application of the tonsure) demonstrates the way this particular body part communicates the importance of ecclesiastical bodies and their exception from secular laws (59, 1259).<sup>602</sup> The wound levelled at Becket's own head allows the violence dealt against his body to be read as an attack against the church, the body of Christ. The saint's body fragment is a metonym for the wider Christian community, the corporate body of the church.

Above all, Guernes's depiction of the violence of Becket's death exploits the rich symbolic potential of the blood this violence spills. That depiction also foregrounds the way Becket's blood forges connections between body and place. *Thomas* describes at length the visual effect created by the vivid splatter of red blood and white brain matter against the cathedral floor:

Qui dunc veïst le sanc od le cervel chaïr  
 E sur le pavement l'un od l'autre gesir,  
 De roses e de lílies li peüst sovenir,  
 Car dunc veïst le sanc el blanc cervel rovir,  
 Le cervel ensemment el vermeil sanc blanchir.  
 (5636-40)

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<sup>599</sup> Mason, p. 101.

<sup>600</sup> See Ephesians 1. 22-23, in which God sets Christ as head of the church: 'ipsum dedit caput supra omnem ecclesiam, quae est corpus ipsius' ('gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body').

<sup>601</sup> Hayes, 'Body as Champion', (p. 190).

<sup>602</sup> On the symbolism of monastic tonsure, see Robert Mills, 'The Signification of the Tonsure', in *Holiness and Masculinity in the Middle Ages*, ed. by P. H. Cullum and Katherine J. Lewis (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004), pp. 109-26 (pp. 112, 122).

The exposure of Becket's blood and brains is presented as something beautiful and holy that makes Becket's sanctity visible and interpretable.<sup>603</sup> As Jennifer O'Reilly demonstrates, the colourful imagery deployed in this passage, the intertwining of red and white, the encouragement to read the blood and brains as 'roses e [...] lilies', participates in a well-established medieval exegetical tradition. This tradition builds on biblical imagery, particularly from Canticles 5. 10 ('dilectus meus candidus et rubicundus electus ex milibus') to comment on the lives and deaths of Christ and his saints.<sup>604</sup> The literature developed around this imagery associates the red rose with the violent, bloody deaths of martyrs and the white lily with the pure, blameless lives of confessors.<sup>605</sup> Through its lingering description of Becket's blood and brains mingling red and white on the church flagstones, *Thomas* makes a case for his participation in both modes of sanctity, confession and martyrdom. The controversies of his life that might preclude his ascension to sainthood are consequently suppressed, washed clean by this spurt of blood and this all-encompassing declaration of his saintly nature. The blood and brain matter intertwining on the cathedral floor both demonstrate and bring into being Becket's sainthood.

The portrayal of Becket's blood as redemptive is extended beyond the elevation of the archbishop himself to the entire Christian community. The blood and brains spilled at Becket's death are agents not only for constructing his own sanctity, but also for heightening the church's already sacred nature. In a vision, Christ announces to Becket that the spilling of his blood 'eschaucer[a]' and 'glorifier[a]' the church (3856-59). In his description of the martyrdom, Guernes tells us that 'Icel sanc de pechié covint par sanc laver' (5559); Becket's saintly blood thus purifies the church of the pollution of sin, washing it clean. Becket's blood has a transformative

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<sup>603</sup> Although Guernes draws on Grim for this account, the particular emphasis on the visual aspect of this blood stain as something to be seen is novel to the French text. In contrast, Grim's *Vita* pays more attention to the exegetical interpretation of the saint's bodily fluids as signifying confession and martyrdom: '[C]oronam, quae ampla fuit, ita a capite separavit, ut sanguis albens ex cerebro, cerebrum nihilominus rubens ex sanguine, lili et rosae coloribus virginis et matris ecclesiae faciem confessoris et martyris vita et morte purpuraret.' (*Vita*, Chapter 82, pp. 437-38); 'the crown, which was large, was separated from the head, so that the blood white from the brain, and the brain equally red from the blood, brightened the floor with the colours of the lily and the rose, the virgin and mother, and the life and death of the confessor and martyr.' (Staunton, *The Lives of Thomas Becket*, p. 203).

<sup>604</sup> 'My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand'.

<sup>605</sup> 'The Double Martyrdom of Thomas Becket: Hagiography or History?', *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History*, 7 (1985), 183-247 (p. 197).

quality that is activated at the moment of its externalisation from his body. Once again, *Thomas* forges a parallel with Christ: the martyr's blood recalls the sacrificial blood of crucifixion, symbolically evoking the redemptive, transformative quality of Christ's death and resurrection.<sup>606</sup> Just as Christ's death redeems the souls of mankind, Becket's death redeems medieval Christendom from the corruption into which it has fallen. Yet, nestled within this conventional depiction of bodily violation as a route to sanctity, there remains a hint of uneasiness about the potential for blood to signify not only life-giving sacrifice, but also sinful, anxiety-provoking transgression.<sup>607</sup> The sin the saint's blood is washing away is the sin of Becket's bloody murder: the 'sanc de pechie' and the blood which cleanses it are the very same blood. The shadow of blood's sinful and corrupting potential remains, folded within this depiction of its redemptive purity.

The potent imagery of the blood stain is equally picked up by other aspects of Becket's cult. The capacity of the redness of blood to evoke the glories of a redemptive martyrdom is exploited by the cathedral building's visual programme. The pillars encircling Becket's post-1220 shrine were constructed from a rose-pink Tournai marble, topped with arches of white limestone (Figure 30). Paul Binski explores how the selection of pink and white stone visually recalls the mingling red and white of the blood and brains spilled at Becket's death, in a remarkable example of how the development of Becket's material cult responds to the saint's textual tradition.<sup>608</sup> As suggested above, the pillar has a particular resonance with the saint, his death, as well as Christ himself.<sup>609</sup> Moreover, the pillars draw the eye upwards, rising towards the heavens, encouraging contemplation of the ways in which Becket's glorious death, the violent spilling of his blood, allows his ascension to

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<sup>606</sup> Jean-Pierre Perrot, 'Violence et sacré: du meurtre au sacrifice dans la *Vie de saint Thomas Becket* de Guernes de Pont-Sainte-Maxence', in *La Violence dans le monde médiéval: colloque du Centre universitaire d'études et de recherches médiévales d'Aix-en-Provence, mars 1994* (Aix-en-Provence: CUER-MA, 1994), pp. 399-412 (p. 406); Nicholas Vincent, *The Holy Blood: King Henry III and the Westminster Blood Relic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Library, 2001), p. 32.

<sup>607</sup> On the threat of corruption posed by blood spilled by violence, see René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1977), pp. 29, 34. Girard argues that the potential contamination of blood can only be purified by the spilling of sacred, sacrificial blood, p. 36.

<sup>608</sup> *Becket's Crown: Art and Imagination in Gothic England, 1170-1300* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), pp. 8-9.

<sup>609</sup> See above, pp. 213-16.

Paradise.<sup>610</sup> The evocation of the bloodstain articulates Becket's sainthood by visually performing his redemptive, triumphant death. The smear of blood and brains against the fabric of the cathedral, a smear that is described by Guernes and by Becket's other hagiographers, is re-enacted and made permanent by the cathedral's architectural programme, rendering the moment of sublime death present and accessible to worshippers. The chapel building thus becomes an encounter between the worshipper and the innermost parts of Becket's body. The church as sacred place is not only defined by the movement of Becket's sacred body through it, but also seems to absorb this body into it. The entire fabric of the church communicates the sense of being surrounded by Becket's martyred body. An experience of Becket, his body, and his sainthood is not concentrated in his corpse, but distributed across the nonhuman architectural space of the church. To enter into the church, to be enveloped in the tomb or surrounded by the chapel windows is not only to share space with Becket's body, but to enter into contact, however diffuse, mediated, and metaphorical, with this body.



Figure 30. Trinity Chapel, 1176-1220, limestone, marble, stained glass, Canterbury Cathedral, Canterbury. Canterbury Cathedral Archives, with permission.

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<sup>610</sup> Hamer, p. 65.

## Blood-drinking and sacred space

If the colours of the chapel's architectural surrounds foreground the importance of enduring encounters with the blood of Becket's martyrdom, the possibility of intimate contact with this blood is repeatedly offered to medieval worshippers through the saint's cult of blood relics. In the previous sections I have explored how Becket's sanctity is articulated in both text and cult through the intertwining of the bodies of saint, author, and pilgrim with the places of Becket's death, his church, his tomb, and his shrine. These places, while places of movement that encourage the flow of bodies into and out of limits both spatial and corporeal, are necessarily tied to a static location that pilgrims must journey towards in order to access Becket's sanctity. But in the Middle Ages Becket also had a thriving relic cult that charted an opposite trajectory, a movement that radiated out from a central locus. Perhaps the chief agents of this expansion were the blood relics distributed at Becket's shrine. Guernes describes how Becket's spilled blood is soaked up with cloth, diluted in water and distributed as a pilgrim souvenir in *ampullae* (77, 5903).<sup>611</sup> As well as carrying it away, pilgrims could use this bloody concoction, known as Canterbury water, on site, either drinking it or washing their bodies in it at Becket's tomb (78-79). While drinking liquids associated with relics (such as water mixed with tomb scrapings) was a common method of seeking healing, the consumption of saint's blood offered by Becket's cult was an innovation.<sup>612</sup> As Benedict writes in his *Miracula*, the only precedent is the Eucharist, rendering the drinking of Becket's blood highly charged with sacred potential, as well as creating potential anxiety over its novelty.<sup>613</sup> In what follows I examine the ways in which blood relics are used

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<sup>611</sup> *Ampullae*, small containers for water, oil, and dust relics, were distributed as pilgrim souvenirs since at least the sixth century, and were particularly associated with sacred site in the Holy Land, Gauthier, *Highways of the Faith*, pp. 17, 20.

<sup>612</sup> Koopmans, p. 34; Slocum, *The Cult of Thomas Becket*, p. 69. On the common practice of washing relics in water to be consumed as means to healing, see Crook, *English Medieval Shrines*, p. 17; Sumption, p. 82. Alastair Minnis provides several later medieval English examples of drinking water associated with relics, *Translation of Authority in Medieval English Literature: Valuing the Vernacular* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 134.

<sup>613</sup> 'Nec credimus aliquem hactenus exstitisse, cui Deus hanc similitudinis praeogativam concesserit; solius enim Agni Bethleemitici sanguis et cruor agni Cantuariensis [...] hauriri legitur' (Nor do we believe that up to now there has existed another, to whom God has granted such a prerogative; thus only the blood of the lamb of Bethlehem and the blood of the lamb of Canterbury were selected to be drunk (Benedict, *Miracula*, I. 12)).

within Becket's cult as a way to uncouple sanctity from static location, by enabling Becket's sainthood to be experienced at a distance. I additionally consider how the containment, circulation, and consumption of Becket's blood renegotiate spatial and bodily boundaries.

Becket's blood relics introduce complex relationships between interiority and exteriority, inside and outside that inform the saint's material cult, as well as Guernes's text. *Thomas's* portrayal of the healing properties and applications of the saint's blood explores the limits of the human body. Guernes distinguishes between the treatment of external illnesses cured by washing the outside of the body in blood and that of internal sicknesses, treated by drinking it: 'Dedenz l'ume e defors sane les enfertez, | Par beivre e par laver mil en i ad sanez' (78-79).<sup>614</sup> This distinction establishes a clear division between bodily outside and inside, as the healing properties of the sacred liquid can only pertain to the side of this division it comes into contact with, unable to seep through to the other side. Indeed, for Hayes, the process of making pilgrims' broken bodies whole through miraculous healing sublimates and repairs the violent violation of Becket's own body in his martyrdom.<sup>615</sup> Yet the consumption of Becket's blood also makes the pilgrim's body a site of interchange with what is external to it. If the spilling of Becket's blood at his death reminds the reader of the vulnerability of the body's inner matter to overflow its containing limits, the consumption of his blood by the faithful exposes the counterpart to this disruption of bodily limits: the reincorporation of the external into the body's limits. Once again, Becket's cult offers up an alternative means of coming into physical proximity with the saint, one that operates in quite different spatial terms from the encounter with his tomb or with the church. In drinking Becket's blood, the pilgrim seeks not to be surrounded by the sacred enclosure, but to ingest the sacred body.

Just as visitors to the tomb in the 1170s might have encountered this exploration of bodily limits and sacred blood through Guernes's performance of his text, so later pilgrims to Becket's post-translation chapel would have witnessed a similar concern with blood and bodies depicted in the miracle windows surrounding his shrine. The majority of these windows depict miraculous cures and several

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<sup>614</sup> Pierre-André Sigal, 'Naissance et premier développement d'un vinage exceptionnel: l'eau de saint Thomas', *Cahiers de civilisation médiéval*, 173 (2001), 35-44 (p. 43).

<sup>615</sup> Hayes, 'Body as Champion', p. 204.



display the act of drinking Becket's blood in order to facilitate this healing, either at his tomb or from a distance (see Figures 28, 32). The miraculous healing of Hugh of Jervaulx is depicted in four windows in the chapel's north ambulatory.<sup>616</sup> After doctors failed to cure him (Figure 31), Hugh turned to Becket's blood. The uppermost panel in this cycle depicts Hugh sitting in his sickbed and drinking the martyr's blood, administered by a figure holding a staff, whose appearance suggests he is a pilgrim to Becket's tomb (Figure 32). The legend beneath Hugh's bed explicates this consumption: 'SPES DESPERANTI SVPEREST IN SANCVINE SANCTI[IME]'; the saint's healing power resides in the bloody remnants of his body.<sup>617</sup> Blood within Becket's cult is thus not only a strategy to establish his sanctity, but also a powerful means for the faithful to access his *virtus*. The fragmentary caption accompanying the following panel (Figure 33) further emphasises that healing is contingent on the ingestion of this blood: '[...] | S | C BIBIT HIC CVIS SANGVINE SANAT'.<sup>618</sup> Yet the image in this panel balances the emphasis on consumption with a scene of bodily expulsion.<sup>619</sup> Hugh leans over the side of his bed, a vivid blood flow streaming from his nose. Ingestion of sacred blood is here paralleled by the purging of the impure blood of sickness.<sup>620</sup> Blood, the blood of Becket but also that of the invalid seeking healing, foregrounds the permeability of the body's boundaries, as it flows both into and out of Hugh's body.<sup>621</sup> As in *Thomas*, the moment of healing, expressed through ingestion and expulsion, makes the devotee's body porous and penetrable. The expulsion of blood outside of Hugh's body recalls the spilling of Becket's blood in the martyrdom: in

<sup>616</sup> Hugh's healing is recounted in Benedict, *Miracula*, III. 60. The cycle's fourth window is a modern restoration, and is not discussed here, Caviness, *The Windows of Christ Church Cathedral*, pp. 181-92.

<sup>617</sup> Translated by Caviness as 'hope remains for the hopeless in the blood of the saint', *The Windows of Christ Church Cathedral*, pp. 191-92.

<sup>618</sup> 'this man drinks [...] he is healed by the blood', *ibid.*

<sup>619</sup> The text in Benedict's collection also emphasises that Hugh's healing revolves around a parallel consumption and expulsion: 'invocato martyre, de aqua gustasset, sanguine statim a naribus ejus impetuosius erumpente, convaluit' (As soon as he had tasted the blood, invoking the martyr, blood violently burst forth from his nose, and he was healed (Benedict, *Miracula*, III. 60)).

<sup>620</sup> Both collections of miracles contain several examples of healings associated with a flow of blood from the supplicant: Benedict, *Miracula*, II. 64, 76, 116; William, *Miraculorum*, II. 17; III. 10.

<sup>621</sup> For the ways in which blood in the Middle Ages is used to negotiate the body as a bounded entity whose limits nevertheless need policing, see Bildhauer, *Medieval Blood*, p. 7.

this way, healing is a moment of identification between suppliant and saint.<sup>622</sup> Moreover, the purging highlights the transformative qualities of the saint's blood, healing the sick body in the same way that it exalts Becket to sanctity or redeems the Christian church (5559). The cleansing of Hugh's body through the ingestion of sacred blood and expulsion of corrupt blood suggests that, like the chapel architecture, the devotee's body can become a site on which the imagery of Becket's martyrdom is projected and re-enacted.

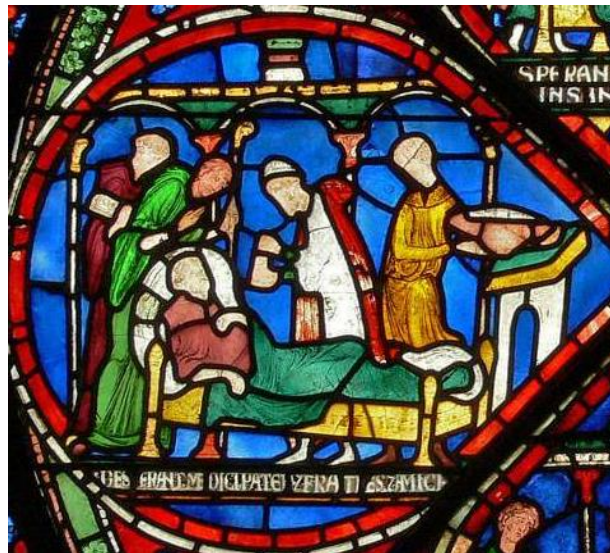


Figure 31. Hugh of Jervaux attended by doctors, c. 1200-c. 1220, stained glass, Trinity Chapel, north ambulatory Becket miracle window n.iii, Canterbury Cathedral, Canterbury.

<sup>622</sup> This identification of saint and suppliant recalls, but functions slightly differently to, the resemblances between Edward's living body and his petitioners, see Chapter Two, pp. 177-87.

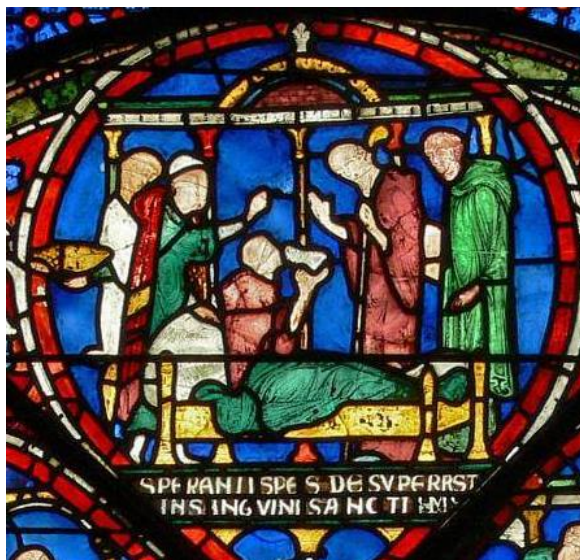


Figure 32. Hugh drinking Becket's blood, c. 1200-c. 1220, stained glass, Trinity Chapel, north ambulatory Becket miracle window n.iii, Canterbury Cathedral, Canterbury.

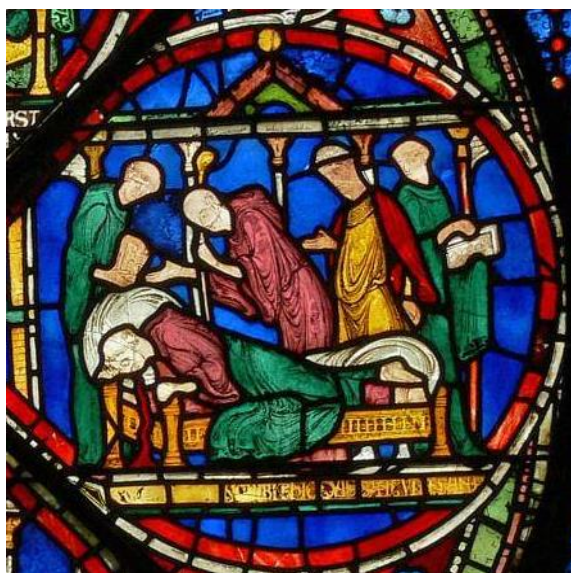


Figure 33. Hugh healed with a nosebleed, c. 1200-c. 1220, stained glass, Trinity Chapel, north ambulatory Becket miracle window n.iii, Canterbury Cathedral, Canterbury.

Importantly, this identification of saint and worshipper suggests that Becket's blood relics provide access to the saint at a distance from the central locus of the church. These panels' layout encourages a visual association between the presentation of Hugh's sickbed and that of Becket's tomb in one of its many representations elsewhere in the windows: both bed and tomb are positioned in the panel's foreground, surrounded by a cluster of figures against an architectural background (compare Figures 28 and 32). There is here a double identification of the worshipper with Becket's martyred body – at the moment of death but also in its afterlife as a relic. This visual parallel not only invites the viewer to associate Becket's entombed body with his supplicant's body, but also suggests that consumption of the saint's blood can replicate the experience and the miraculous outcome of pilgrimage to the tomb.

Becket's blood relics thus articulate spiritual space as expansive. These relics act as portable loci of sanctity, allowing Becket's power to be accessed beyond the confines of his shrine. Guernes writes that Becket's blood is carried throughout the world diluted in water and contained in *ampullae*: 'En ewe e en ampoles fait par le mund porter' (5903). The dilution, containment, and distribution of Becket's blood are here envisaged as a spatial expansion of the saint's cult throughout the world, outwards and away from his central shrine. The portable relics associated with Canterbury transform the nature of distance between saint and worshipper, making that distance extendible, rather than fixed.<sup>623</sup> In this respect, Guernes's depiction of Becket's relic cult contrasts with his description of Becket's textual commemorations. Blood relics enable access to Becket at a distance whereas the written texts Guernes attempted to draw on to compose his life distorted knowledge of the saint. These relics only increase Becket's power as they travel away from Canterbury, while Guernes must travel towards this cult centre to validate his tale.

The *ampullae*, the pilgrim souvenirs or miniature reliquaries that contained the saint's blood and enabled its geographical extension, exemplify the complex ways in which Becket's blood relics recreate and expand the limits of sacred space. Initially distributed in unreliable wooden containers, by 1173 Becket's blood was enclosed within mass-produced lead or tin phials that provided significant

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<sup>623</sup> Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, p. 89.

opportunities for visual elaboration.<sup>624</sup> As Becket's blood souvenirs developed throughout the thirteenth century, there is a clear shift towards elaborating the relic with visual representations of Becket's sanctity.<sup>625</sup> The ornate forms these reliquary souvenirs took articulate the holiness of their contents in very different ways. The architectural form of the thirteenth-century *ampulla* in Figure 34 evokes a dense nexus of ideas about saintly bloodshed, sacred space, and movement. Its form and decoration mimics the larger Limoges chasse-shaped reliquaries produced in significant numbers for Becket's relic cult in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. Simone Caudron counts more than fifty surviving chasse examples, noting the uniformity of their material make-up (copper with blue enamel) and iconographic programme.<sup>626</sup> The example shown in Figure 35, currently housed in the Victoria and Albert Museum, is particularly iconographically rich: its front panel places Becket's martyrdom in close proximity to the church altar and cross, visually reinforcing the comparison between Becket's death and Christ's passion. The upper panel, forming the roof of the reliquary, juxtaposes the ascent of Becket's soul to heaven with the continued presence of his body on earth, as it is laid in its tomb.<sup>627</sup> The reliquary concisely communicates Becket's sanctity and the importance of his relics, evoking a connection between the saint's corpse entombed at Canterbury and its own sacred contents.

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<sup>624</sup> Benedict, *Miracula*, III. 22.

<sup>625</sup> Or indeed a replacement of the relic, as non-reliquary pilgrim badges proliferated in the later Middle Ages, superseding *ampullae* by the end of the thirteenth century, Jennifer M. Lee, 'Searching for Signs: Pilgrims' Identity and Experience made Visible in the *Miracula sancti Thomae Cantuariensis*', in *Art and Architecture of Late Medieval*, ed. by Blick and Tekippe, I, pp. 473-91 (p. 474).

<sup>626</sup> Simone Caudron 'Les Châsses de Thomas Becket en émail de Limoges', in *Thomas Becket*, ed. by Foreville, pp. 233-41 (pp. 233-35). These chasses were widely distributed across medieval Europe: many were housed in England and France, but Caudron also traces examples owned in Italy, Germany, Spain, and Sweden, see 'La Diffusion des chasses de saint Thomas Becket dans l'Europe médiévale', in *L'Œuvre de Limoges et sa diffusion: trésors, objets, collections*, ed. by Danielle Gaborit-Chopin and Frédéric Tixier (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2011), pp. 23-41.

<sup>627</sup> Gameson, pp. 55, 64.



Figure 34a. Chasse-shaped *ampulla* (front) depicting the martyrdom, thirteenth century, tin alloy, 43 × 33 × 12 mm, Museum of London, London (8780).



Figure 34b. Chasse-shaped *ampulla* (reverse) with architectural detail, thirteenth century, tin alloy, 43 × 33 × 12 mm, Museum of London, London (8780).





Figure 35. Limoges reliquary chasse depicting the martyrdom, Becket's entombment and ascent to heaven, c. 1180-1190, copper, enamel, crystal, glass, wooden core, 29.5 × 34.4 × 12.4 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (M.66-1997).

In structure and decoration, these reliquaries and their smaller *ampulla* copies, which also depict the martyrdom (Figure 34a), act as portable recreations of the experience of pilgrimage. The visual narrative of Becket's martyrdom depicted on these artefacts reiterates his sainthood to the worshipper, re-enacting the transformative death within the cathedral. The iconography traces the process by which its contents became holy, through the glory of righteous death and ascension to heaven. The sloping roofs and decorative vaulting on the *ampulla*'s reverse side recall the church building's architectural forms, miming the sacred places encountered by pilgrims (Figure 34b).<sup>628</sup> Like the windows depicting Hugh's healing, reliquary chasse and *ampulla* concisely communicate to the viewer that an encounter with the saint's blood can stand in for pilgrimage to Becket's Canterbury shrine. As in Guernes's depictions of Becket's martyrdom, sanctity is articulated through an exploration of spatiality. These artefacts' architectural form recalls both tomb and church, miming the sacred places encountered by the pilgrim; this formal

<sup>628</sup> On the relationship between architectural reliquaries and church buildings, see Jean-Pierre Caillet, 'Reliques et architecture religieuse aux époques carolingienne et romane', in *Les Reliques*, ed. by Bozóky and Helvétius, pp. 169-97 (p. 180).

imitation allows the viewer access to saintly body and spiritual place even at a distance from the central location of the church, alleviating the need for physical proximity to these sites. The experience of the worshipper faced with the reliquary or *ampulla* renegotiates the terms of spatial encounters with Becket, provoking an experience of sacred space that is very different to that undergone by a pilgrim visiting his tomb or shrine. The imitation of the Limoges chasses in *ampulla* form imposes a process of miniaturisation on a representation of sacred place already in miniature: the Victoria and Albert chasse is less than 30 cm in height and the *ampulla* is only 4 cm tall, small enough to wrap one's hands around.<sup>629</sup> Moreover, the *ampulla*'s sealed opening ensures that its contents remain out of sight unless decanted. Becket's blood is thus present but invisible. The worshipper is not engulfed within the sacred space created by the walls of the church, the glass of the chapel, or the windows of the tomb. The faithful do not move through space to invoke Becket's power. Rather, the devotee contemplating these reliquaries is external to the sacred space contained within its barriers. It is the sacred object that can be moved through space, can be picked up, handled, and deployed at will by the worshipper. If the sacred space of the church is defined by its interiority, the architectural *ampulla* gives this sacred space an outside, an external surface that can be tangibly interacted with by the faithful.

Moreover, these containers not only make sacred space portable, but further multiply spiritual space, creating a proliferating network of multiple, easily handled access points to the saint. Becket's reliquaries suggest that his cult requires a further re-adjustment of Certeau's conception of sacred space as a singular, foundational *non-lieu* to which saint and narrative return.<sup>630</sup> Much like the multiplication of overlapping sacred sites within *Thomas*, or the visual replication of sacred space in the miracle windows, these portable shrines assert that spiritual space is not singular, but multiple, suggesting that the spiritual *non-lieu* can be replicated.<sup>631</sup> The spiritual space of the church, the anchoring point of Becket's sainthood, is infinitely reproducible, extending Becket's sacred spaces in a broad geographic network of

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<sup>629</sup> Thus enabling the ordinary pilgrim to directly handle a reliquary – often a privilege reserved for the upper classes and clergy, see Sarah Blick, 'Common Ground: Reliquaries and the Lower Classes in Late Medieval Europe', in *Matter of Faith: An Interdisciplinary Study of Relics and Relic Veneration in the Medieval Period*, ed. by James Robinson, Lloyd de Beer, and Anna Harnden (London: The British Museum, 2014), pp. 110-15 (p. 110).

<sup>630</sup> Certeau, pp. 286-87.

<sup>631</sup> On the *ampullae* as portable shrines, see Finucane, p. 163.



*non-lieux*. Indeed, this network of sacred spaces in turn produces new connections between saint and supplicant at a distance from Canterbury, mimicking the structuring role of the church as centre for miracle production. Numerous Latin miracle tales recount how returning pilgrims use their souvenir blood to heal others, suggesting this blood becomes a new centre from which Becket's miraculous intercession radiates.<sup>632</sup> The church, as location of the martyrdom, the saintly body, and indeed the inception of Becket-as-saint, may be the centre of Becket's cult, but it is a centre that can be multiplied in a network of spatial artefacts that in turn form new sacred centres that generate new miracles and affirmations of Becket's sainthood.

### **'Li sanc al seint se deit par tut le mund estendre'**

The elaborate visual representations of sacred space in Becket's thirteenth-century *ampullae* are not conveyed in Guernes's description of these objects. Although Guernes stresses the importance of the 'ampoles' that contain Becket's blood in the spread of the saint's cult, he provides little description of their visual appearance. Comparing them to other saints' pilgrim badges, he writes:

Mais de Jerusalem est la palme aportee,  
 E de Rochemadur, Marie en plum getee,  
 De Saint Jame, l'escale qui en plum est müee;  
 Or ad Deus saint Thomas cel ampole donee  
 Qui est par tut le mund cherie e honuree.  
 (5896-5900)

While other pilgrim souvenirs are defined by their appearance, Becket's is represented simply as a container, its sanctity deriving from its sacred contents rather than its form or material. Guernes draws a clear distinction here between representation and embodiment: the 'ampoles' have no need to visually represent Becket's saintly presence, as they contain him. Blood relics prove themselves to be

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<sup>632</sup> Miracles produced by Becket's blood-water *ampullae* at a distance from Canterbury, from healing to miraculous manipulation of matter, include: Benedict, *Miracula*, I. 18, 19; II. 19, 32; IV. 12; William, *Miraculorum*, II. 19; IV. 9, 45; v. 9; VI. 79, 104. On the ways Becket's relics contribute to the increasing decentralisation of his cult, see Ward, p. 132.

highly useful in the spread of Becket's cult: as an infinitely divisible part of the saint's body, blood allows the distribution of an infinite number of relics.<sup>633</sup> Each bodily component stands in for the whole body: through dispersal, the saint's body expands and multiplies, remaining whole but diffuse, losing none of its spiritual power.<sup>634</sup>

Rather than dwell on the appearance of the containing *ampullae*, Guernes explores how Becket's presence is physically and geographically extended in a series of reflections on the nature of blood as fluid, flowing liquid, as well as on its dense symbolic potential. Particularly important here are a sequence of prophetic dreams that Becket's mother experiences while pregnant with the future saint.<sup>635</sup> The first dream imagines the child she carries as a great flow of water from the Thames that enters into her womb (171-75).<sup>636</sup> This flow of water draws attention to medieval Aristotelian conceptions of female bodies as leaking containers unable to control the bodily fluids that pass through their permeable boundaries.<sup>637</sup> This sense of flux is exacerbated in her second dream, in which the gestating Becket swells his mother's body so that she is unable to pass through the church door: 'Quant volt entrer en l'us, si ot le ventre enflé | K'ele n'i pot entrer' (178-79). Again, this vision plays on ideas about women's bodies inflected by an Aristotelian natural philosophy that constructs them as inferior to male bodies, of which they are an improperly formed version, ruled by an instability of form.<sup>638</sup> The body of Becket's mother is distorted by the child within her, expanding her bodily contours and preventing her access to the sacred church space. Within *Thomas* the maternal body is described as unstable, excessive, and overflowing.

Despite these potentially unsettling associations with maternal instability, both dreams are interpreted in ways that points towards Becket's saintly life and afterlife. The swelling of his mother's pregnant body that prevents her entry into church stands for Becket's uncontainable goodness ('Tute Sÿon ne pot cumprendre

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<sup>633</sup> Hayes, *Body and Sacred Place*, p. 85.

<sup>634</sup> Robinson, p. 43.

<sup>635</sup> On the trope of prenatal dreams about saints, see Ward, p. 169. Guernes adapts these visions from Grim, *Vita*, Chapters 2-5.

<sup>636</sup> This dream is potentially yet another of Guernes's biblical allusions, again heightening the association between Becket and Christ: John 7. 38, 'Qui credit in me, sicut dicit Scriptura, flumina de ventre ejus fluent aquae vivae' ('He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water').

<sup>637</sup> Bildhauer, *Medieval Blood*, p. 93.

<sup>638</sup> Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, p. 109.

sa bunté' (180)), while the flow of water into her womb signifies Becket's unbounded authority (174). The maternal body's expansion and spatial exclusion is thus interpreted as a figure for Becket's own limitless qualities, which will overflow spatial boundaries in their turn. These dreams depict the unborn saint as a nonhuman force that troubles bodily and spatial boundaries as part of the communication and expansion of his sainthood. In these respects, both dreams anticipate important aspects of Becket's posthumous cult. A significant number of Becket's miracles are concerned with the boundary-troubling, miraculous materiality of his blood relics, which leak from or boil over their containers, receding from or exceeding their boundaries.<sup>639</sup> Moreover, throughout his cult Becket is associated with water. His mother's dream anticipates the circulation of his blood as Canterbury water, foregrounding the importance of liquid in post-mortem experiences of the saint.<sup>640</sup> Guernes encourages a sustained identification between Becket's body and expansive liquids extending from before his birth to after his death, reinforcing the continuities between the saint and his posthumous blood relics.

The relationship between the unborn saint (associated with expansive liquidity) and his blood relics (again characterised by fluid expansion) is brought even more explicitly to the fore in his mother's final vision. Shortly after Becket's birth, she dreams that the infant is covered with a folded red ('vermeilz' (191)) cloth that, when she unfolds it, spreads out, filling the house, then the street, then all of London, until 'tut Engleterre ne purreit pas comprendre | La grandeur de cel pécie' (192-99). A heavenly voice announces that this uncontainable cloth is a figure for the spread of Becket's blood, mingling bodily and spatial extension: 'Mult pöüm bien entendre | Li sanc al seint se deit par tut le mund estendre' (199-200).<sup>641</sup> While

<sup>639</sup> For a selection of these miracles, including a number in which Canterbury water transforms into other liquids such as oil and milk, see Benedict, *Miracula*, I. 17-19; II. 21, 22; III. 20, 23-25; IV. 12. William, *Miraculorum*, VI. 43, 62, 155.

<sup>640</sup> On the importance of water metaphors in Becket's wider cult, see Alyce A. Jordan, 'The St Thomas Becket Windows at Angers and Coutances: Devotion, Subversion and the Scottish Connection', in *The Cult of St Thomas Becket*, ed. by Webster and Gelin, pp. 171-207 (p. 188). Moreover, Becket is particularly associated with saving the faithful from drowning and shipwrecks, see Benedict, *Miracula*, IV. 63, 66; VI. 3; William, *Miraculorum*, II. 41, 46, 71; III. 41, 43, 45, 46; IV. 5, 47, 50, 52.

<sup>641</sup> In contrast to Grim, Guernes asserts that this miracle specifically signifies that Becket's blood will spread over the world, and places greater emphasis on the expansiveness of its reach. Grim writes that the cloth principally signifies the blood that covered him at the martyrdom, with its spread over foreign lands a secondary element: 'purpuram pretiosam sanguinem interpretamur martyris innocenter occisi, quo perfusus in passione jacuit et

objects like the shrine-shaped *ampullae* generate a network of discrete recreations of sacred space, the metaphors of this dream and its preceding visions of flowing water and bodily instability emphasise a fluid conception of sacred space that draws attention to blood relics' liquid nature.<sup>642</sup> The uncontainable cloth figures the expansion of Becket's blood as a continuous, ever-unfolding surface that covers the earth. This is a rather different model of expansion from that proposed by the chasse-shaped *ampullae* in that it is less concerned with the recreation of space than with an unbroken extension of the limits of Becket's body.

The sense of continuity between saint and spreading cloth is heightened in Beneit's Anglo-Norman *Vie de Thomas Becket*, which was written slightly later than Guernes's text. In Beneit's version, Becket's mother similarly dreams of a purple ('purpris' (*Becket*, 57)) cloth that miraculously expands when unfolded. However, the fabric she dreams of not only covers her child, but is itself the child she has given birth to: 'Si esteit né un pailler grant | tut pleyé' (29-30). The saint is thus completely identified with the cloth. Beneit accentuates the ways in which, across Becket's cult, depictions of his body emphasise the potential for nonhuman objects to incarnate and extend his saintly presence. Beneit emphasises the potentially unsettling nature of this dream, as Becket's mother's maid declares:

Un paille grant, pleed estreit,  
Est nez de vous, ne sai ke deit,  
U mal ou bien.

(34-36)

In the maid's account, the child-cloth exceeds human understanding and its meaning is troublingly ambiguous, being neither definitively good nor definitively bad. Indeed, unlike Guernes, Beneit provides no explanation of how this dream might signify Becket's saintliness or future relics. The cloth remains obscure and unexplained. In both Beneit's and Guernes's versions, Becket's mother's dreams

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velatus, nunc vero per tot terrarum regna exterasque nationes extensum est' (Grim, *Vita*, Chapter 5, p. 358). Translated by Staunton as 'the precious purple cloth signifies the blood of the martyr innocently killed, which covered him in his passion as he lay dead, but is now spread through so many kingdoms and foreign nations', *The Lives of Thomas Becket*, p. 41.

<sup>642</sup> On the multivalent symbolism of textiles and their fluid resemblance to liquid, see Kathryn M. Rudy, 'Introduction: Miraculous Textiles in *Exempla* and Image from the Low Countries', in *Weaving, Veiling, and Dressing: Textiles and their Metaphors in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. by Kathryn M. Rudy and Barbara Baert (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), pp. 1-36 (p. 20).

suggest that reading the body as more than a body – as nonhuman, symbolic, or spatial – can be as troubling as it is productive.

This tension is particularly acute in associations between Becket's uncontainability and the maternal body. In his account of these dreams, Guernes intensifies the connections between Becket and maternal bodies explored through the saint's association with 'la mere iglise': not only is Becket identified with a feminised church, but his blood relics are also tied to the products of childbirth. Just as the blood shed at Becket's martyrdom has both salvific and potentially troubling significance, so too Guernes's exploration of maternal bodies highlights the multivalent significance of women's materiality in the Middle Ages. Women's bodies, and maternal bodies, are often coded as transgressing boundaries in a deeply threatening way in medieval culture.<sup>643</sup> The use of the maternal, pregnant body to think through the symbolic potential of Becket-as-saint positions his own body as potentially transgressive, as an uncontainable physical force that obstructs entryways or passes through boundaries. The red cloth which swaddles the infant Becket and becomes a figure for his blood relics suggests an association between the blood of Becket's sacrifice and the bloody products of childbirth, products which are associated, in the Middle Ages, with corruption and pollution.<sup>644</sup> The sacrificial, redemptive blood of Becket's martyrdom is implicitly mapped onto the matter produced by the maternal body, recalling the potentially contaminating blood of parturition. It seems fitting in this respect that Becket is particularly associated with childbirth miracles: several are recorded in his twelfth-century miracle collections and a number of later medieval prayers evoke Becket's mother as a model for a safe labour, including a fourteenth-century Anglo-Norman prayer for childbirth that claims it was spoken by Becket's mother during her labour.<sup>645</sup> In these accounts, maternal bodies are the site on which Becket performs miracles, just as the

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<sup>643</sup> Sarah Alison Miller, *Medieval Monstrosity and the Female Body* (New York: Routledge, 2010), pp. 2, 4, 6.

<sup>644</sup> On the potentially threatening nature of women's blood, see Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, p. 109. McCracken examines the ways in which women's blood challenges the symbolic value of men's blood as sacrificial and heroic, *The Curse of Eve*, p. 13.

<sup>645</sup> Becket's childbirth miracles include: Benedict, *Miracula*, I. 16; III. 26; IV. 16; William, *Miraculorum*, II. 66; IV. 27; VI. 70, 113, 163. The Anglo-Norman prayer is preserved in London, British Library, MS Harley 1260, fol. 176<sup>v</sup>; L'Estrange transcribes it as: 'Cest oroison la mere seint Thomas de caunterbirz fist. Et el la dist devaunt son enfaument. Et fem qe la dirra ia de son enfaunt ne perra', p. 63.

metaphorical and physical fluidity with which his mother's body is identified anticipates his sainthood.

As in Becket's martyrdom, there is a sense in these accounts of his mother's dreams that the extraordinary nature of the saint's blood enfolds within it a multitude of meanings, some of which are more disruptive than others. Blood within *Thomas* is undoubtedly a holy substance and agent of salvation, yet it is simultaneously haunted by its associations with non-humanity, pollution, and troublesome female bodies. *Thomas* explores how these meanings may be reconciled in order to demonstrate Becket's sainthood. The parallel of Becket's blood relics and the blood of childbirth recalls the association of Christ as mother explored above.<sup>646</sup> The use of cloth as a figure for Becket also taps into Christological comparisons: Christ's human flesh is often figured as a garment that the deity puts on, a textile metaphor that reinforces links between cloth, bodies, and the divine.<sup>647</sup> The purple cloth evoked in Beneit's *Becket* reinforces such an association with Christ, who was thought to have been clothed in a purple cloak at his crucifixion.<sup>648</sup> The unfolding cloth in both texts thus emphasises the redemptive, communal qualities of Becket's blood as a source of Christ-like generation.

The maternal body and its ambiguous leakiness are thus bound up with the more obviously positive implications of Becket's blood. The Christ-like, redemptive qualities of Becket's blood, as well as the bodily permeability to which blood draws attention, is particularly brought out in Guernes's exploration of the consumption of blood relics. Ingestion involves a mingling of two bodies, an absorption of the saintly body into that of the consuming worshipper.<sup>649</sup> Towards the end of *Thomas*, Guernes explicitly likens the spread of Becket's blood to Christ's sacrifice of his own blood for the Christian community:

En semblance de vin e d'ewe fait user

Deus sun sanc par le mund pur les anemes salver;

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<sup>646</sup> See pp. 212-23.

<sup>647</sup> Indeed, the association of blood and cloth in Becket's lives perhaps echoes the Gospel story of a woman cured of a bloody flux by touching the hem of Christ's clothing, Matthew 9. 20-21; Mark 5. 25-29. On textiles in Christian symbolism more broadly, see Rudy, 'Introduction: Miraculous Textiles', pp. 2-3. On the widespread use of textiles as contact relics and relic wrappings, see Janet E. Snyder, 'Vestimentary Signs of Pilgrimage in Twelfth-century Europe', in *Matter of Faith*, ed. by Robinson, Beer, and Harnden, pp. 8-14 (pp. 8, 10).

<sup>648</sup> Mark 15. 17, 20; John 19. 2, 5.

<sup>649</sup> Hamer, p. 66.

En ewe e en ampoles fait par le mund porter  
 Deus le sanc al martir pur les enferms saner.  
 En santé e el signe i fait l'onur dubler.  
 (5901-05)

This comparison of Becket's blood relics and Christ's blood not only sustains the identification throughout the text between Becket and Christ, but also establishes a parallel between the drinking of blood relics and the Eucharistic consumption of God's blood.<sup>650</sup> In particular the dilution of Becket's blood in water recalls the mixing of wine and water in the communion ritual.<sup>651</sup> Guernes's depiction of blood relics in this passage additionally nurtures the identification between saint and worshipper. As would be the case in communion, ingestion of Becket's blood is an act of incorporation through which those consuming it are absorbed into a wider symbolic body: the Christian community, the body of God.<sup>652</sup> In the moment of consumption, the bodies of the faithful merge with that of the saint and with the metaphorical body of the church. This stanza's final line (5905) suggests the miraculous healings engendered by blood relics are signs that bolster Becket's glory. As in the Canterbury windows, the pilgrim's body contributes to the continued articulation of Becket's sainthood through its miraculous healing. The communication of Becket's sainthood is distributed not only across the fabric of the church and his blood relics, but also across the bodies of the pilgrims who visit his shrine and consume his blood.

The treatment of Becket's blood souvenirs also incorporates his worshippers into a larger community in ways that go beyond the Eucharistic associations of consuming that blood. *Ampullae* were not only prime agents of blood relics' spatial distribution, but also would have had a marked effect on the worshipper's body. Becket's *ampullae* had a powerful labelling function in text and cult practice: as

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<sup>650</sup> On the multivalent nature of Eucharistic symbolism, see Caroline Walker Bynum, 'The Blood of Christ in the Later Middle Ages', *Church History*, 71.4 (2002), 685-714 (p. 690).

<sup>651</sup> Barlow, *Thomas Becket*, p. 265. The intermingling of blood and water also recalls the flow of blood and water from Christ's pierced side during the Crucifixion, see John 19. 34.

<sup>652</sup> On communion as incorporation of God, see Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), p. 3. On communion as incorporation of the Christian into God, see Ann W. Astell, *Eating Beauty: The Eucharist and the Spiritual Arts of the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), p. 14. In particular, Maggie Kilgour foregrounds communion as a form of reciprocal consumption, *From Communion to Cannibalism: An Anatomy of Metaphors of Incorporation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), p. 15.

Guernes writes, *ampullae* are ‘enseigne[s] del veage’, symbols signifying participation in pilgrimage and contact with Becket’s sacred sites (5895).<sup>653</sup> Many *ampullae* were designed to be worn hung around the neck, signalling that the wearer had been a pilgrim.<sup>654</sup> Wearing the *ampulla* announced to all who saw the wearer that he or she had been a pilgrim to Canterbury and, by extension, had mimicked Becket’s movements through sacred space. The *ampulla* would thus have had a transformative effect on pilgrims’ bodies, changing the way they were understood by viewers. Just as Guernes’s body conveys spiritual truth to his listeners through the performance of his work at the tomb, the *ampullae* enable the pilgrim’s body to become a vehicle for Becket’s sacred power, a node in the network manifesting his saintly presence.

The thirteenth-century *ampulla* in Figure 36 suggests that this transformation of the pilgrim’s body might be inflected by the form the blood-container takes. This *ampulla* is shaped in the form of the saint, who appears flanked by two of his murderers; Becket’s martyrdom is depicted on the reverse side of the object, enclosed within an inscription reading ‘+ OPTIM EGROR MEDIC FIT TOMA BONOR’.<sup>655</sup> Here, the reliquary not only contains Becket, but also represents him. Like the chasse-shaped *ampullae*, there is a shift away from Guernes’s depiction of Becket’s ‘ampoles’ as relic containers with no need to visually represent the saint towards a more explicit visual articulation of sainthood. The figural *ampulla* not only mimics an encounter with Becket’s body, but *is* such an encounter: it confronts the viewer both with a representation of his body and a physical token of it (the blood relic it contains). The representation in tin of Becket’s body stands in for a bodily integrity the saint no longer possesses. The viewer who sees a pilgrim wearing such an *ampulla* looks simultaneously at its wearer and at Becket himself, seeing the saint both directly and through the medium of representation.<sup>656</sup> The practice of wearing blood relics superimposes the encounter between saint and worshipper onto the wearer’s body, transforming the devotee’s human, nonsacred body into a site of saintly exchange. Through the display of Becket’s blood on the body and the

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<sup>653</sup> Lee, p. 487.

<sup>654</sup> Sigal, ‘Naissance et premier développement’, p. 41. Pilgrim badges were also routinely worn pinned to wearers’ hats, Nilson, p. 112.

<sup>655</sup> ‘Thomas is the best doctor for the worthy sick’.

<sup>656</sup> Medieval ideas about relics emphasised that the fragment was as important, and as much a metonym for the saint’s person, as the whole body, Bartlett, p. 102.



consumption of this same blood, Becket's cult encourages a merging of saintly and non-saintly bodies. The pilgrim participates, alongside Becket's relics and reliquaries, in an expansive network that multiplies the spaces occupied by the saint and his sacred presence.



Figure 36a. *Ampulla*, Becket flanked by murderers (front), 1170-1200, lead alloy, 100 × 87 × 28 mm, British Museum, London (1921,0216.62).



Figure 36b. *Ampulla*, martyrdom within legend that reads '+ OPTIM EGROR MEDIC FIT TOMA BONOR' (reverse), 1170-1200, lead alloy, 100 × 87 × 28 mm, British Museum, London (1921,0216.62).

It seems fitting to close this chapter with a return to the foundational, if replicable, space of Canterbury Cathedral. The Hugh of Jervaulx miracle windows discussed above encapsulate the ways in which Becket's blood is used to forge spatial and bodily networks by encouraging access to and identification with the saint. These images are encircled by a bright red frame (Figure 37), as, indeed, are most of the other panels in Becket's Canterbury miracle windows. While the use of red stained glass is not in itself unusual, the predominance of the colour in a space in which blood is frequently consumed, as well as its presence in images depicting this blood-drinking, inflects the colour choice with particular significance.<sup>657</sup> In particular, the stream of red blood from Hugh's nosebleed invites comparison with the red that frames this bodily fluid. If Becket's blood marks the fabric of the church building through its symbolic incorporation into the colours of the stone used to construct his chapel, here the bodily fluids of the sick worshipper seem to colour the framework of the windows. Through the red of the blood, the windows articulate an intertwining of body and architectural surround, connecting the sacred space of the church building to the human bodies of the pilgrims who seek relief from their suffering within it. The intermingling of blood and space that the windows depict is potentially shared in by the faithful pilgrim who gazes upon the stained glass. The windows encourage intense proximity between worshipper and saint: the viewer is surrounded by depictions of past miraculous healings, suggesting the potential miracles to be performed on the pilgrim's own body.<sup>658</sup> The flickering light through the glass would have had a transformative effect on pilgrims' bodies, painting them with the colours of the glass, absorbing them visually into the structure of the church and the narratives of Becket's miraculous afterlife.<sup>659</sup> From the moment the pilgrim stepped inside Becket's chapel, the surface of their body would have been transformed by a blood-red stain of light into an extension of the narrative of Becket's sainthood.

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<sup>657</sup> On the use of red glass, see Richard Marks, *Stained Glass in England During the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 28.

<sup>658</sup> Harris, p. 265.

<sup>659</sup> On the translucency of medieval stained glass, see Nancy M. Thompson, 'Close Encounters with Luminous Objects: Reflections on Studying Stained Glass', in *Transparent Things: A Cabinet*, ed. by Maggie M. Williams and Karen Eileen Overbey (New York: Punctum Books, 2013), pp. 57-67 (p. 65).

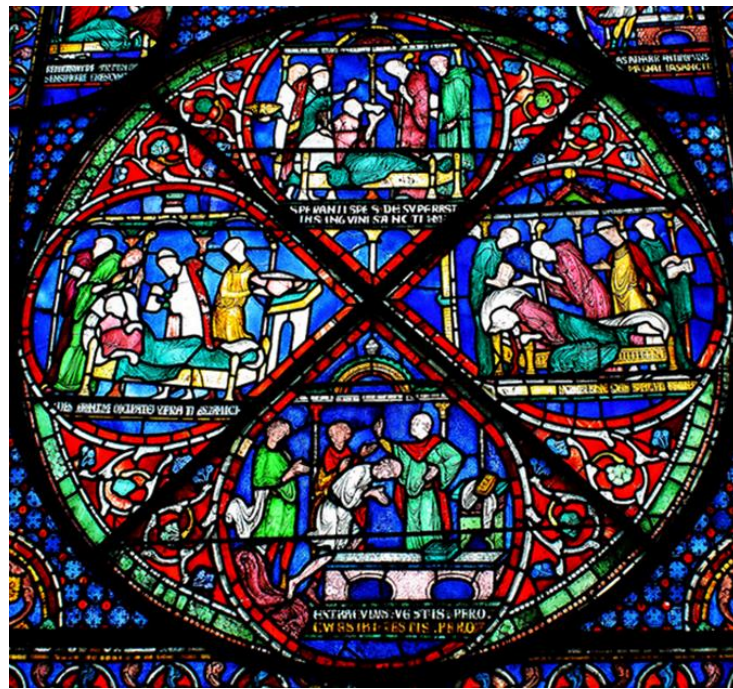


Figure 37. Hugh of Jervaux, c. 1200-c. 1220, stained glass, Trinity Chapel, north ambulatory Becket miracle window n.iii, Canterbury Cathedral, Canterbury.

If the spilling of Becket's blood and brains on the cathedral floor establishes his sanctity, the use of blood relics and representations of his blood in text, image, object, and architecture ensure that his sainthood is constantly reiterated and re-enacted. The church building is transformed through contact with Becket's bloody death, but that transformation also goes far beyond the cathedral's material structure. The distribution of blood relics establishes an interlocking network of portable sacred spaces that transmit Becket's miraculous intercession and saintly presence to hopeful supplicants. The consumption of the saint's blood by worshippers close to or far from Canterbury makes his body accessible to the faithful, even as that body's sanctity is reaffirmed. Indeed, the use of blood within Becket's cult encourages an identification between and, at times, a merging of saint and pilgrim. Both *Thomas* and Becket's wider cult assert that, by drinking Becket's blood, travelling through sacred space, or contemplating images of his healing, the pilgrim's body can be transformed into a means of manifesting Becket's sainthood.

## Chapter Four. Beyond the Body: Gautier de Coinci's *Miracles de Nostre Dame*

Lors a diex pris le cors; | *que* plus n'i demoura;  
 Li angele le recurent; | qui ille commanda;  
 Lassus en sont alez; | a ioie l'emporta;  
 L'ame li mist ou cors; | et bel le rassambla;  
 [...]  
 Ne remest pas en terre; | ainz l'a ou ciel portee;<sup>660</sup>

The Virgin Mary's exceptional corporeality, her body posthumously reunited with her soul in heaven, is laid out in this passage from a late thirteenth-century French copy of Herman de Valenciennes, *L'Asomptions Nostre Dame* (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 22928 (L)).<sup>661</sup> Herman's work is, in this manuscript, bound with Gautier de Coinci's *Miracles de Nostre Dame*. Indeed, the bulk of the codex is devoted to the *Miracles*, a substantial early thirteenth-century collection of Marian miracles songs, and prayers.<sup>662</sup> The manuscript forms a repository of Marian material in French, assembling around the *Miracles* a range of short verse narratives about Mary's ancestry, life, and death adapted from biblical and apocryphal sources.<sup>663</sup> Herman's late twelfth-century Apocrypha translation

<sup>660</sup> Herman de Valenciennes, *L'Asomptions Nostre Dame*, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 22928 (L), fol. 299<sup>r</sup>. *L'Asomptions* is edited in somewhat different form by Ina Spiele from Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 20039; *Li Romanz de Dieu et de sa mere d'Herman de Valenciennes, chanoine et prêtre (XII<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, ed. by Ina Spiele (Leyde: Presse universitaire de Leyde, 1975), pp. 343-58.

<sup>661</sup> On *L*'s date, see Kathryn A. Duys, Kathy M. Krause and Alison Stones 'Appendix I: Gautier de Coinci's *Miracles de Nostre Dame*: Manuscript List', in *Gautier de Coinci: Miracles, Music, and Manuscripts*, ed. by Kathy M. Krause and Alison Stones (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), pp. 345-66 (p. 359, n. 20); Masami Okubo, 'La Formation de la collection des *Miracles* de Gautier de Coinci (seconde partie)', *Romania*, 123 (2005), 406-58 (pp. 413-14). Okubo argues that *L* was produced at the monastery of Saint-Médard where Gautier began and ended his monastic career, *ibid.*, p. 416.

<sup>662</sup> The *Miracles* occupy fols 36<sup>r</sup>-292<sup>r</sup> in *L*. Unless otherwise specified, all references are to Gautier de Coinci, *Les Miracles de Nostre Dame*, ed. by Koenig, for which *L* served as the base manuscript.

<sup>663</sup> *L*'s contents is as follows: *La Genealogie Nostre Dame* (fols 1<sup>r</sup>-3<sup>r</sup>); *La Nativité Nostre Dame* (fols 3<sup>r</sup>-10<sup>r</sup>); *La Nativité Jhesu Crist* (fols 10<sup>r</sup>-24<sup>r</sup>); *La Çainne nostre seigneur* by Herman de Valenciennes (fols 24<sup>r</sup>-32<sup>r</sup>, edited by Spiele in *Li Romanz de Dieu*); *Li Regrés de la mere Jhesu Crist* by Huon le Roi de Cambrai (fols 32<sup>r</sup>-35<sup>r</sup>, edited by Artur Långfors as *Li Regres Nostre Dame* (Paris: Champion, 1907)); the *Miracles de Nostre Dame* by Gautier

narrates Mary's death and, in this passage, the moment that Christ removes her body from earth.<sup>664</sup> In previous chapters, I have examined saintly bodies in various states of inaccessibility, from the forgotten saints Eloi uncovers to Audrey's enclosed corpse. This passage suggests that Mary's body can be characterised by a similar, if more complete sense of absence: her corpse is removed from earth ('Lors a diex pris le cors; | *que plus n'i demoura*'), already reunited with her soul in the perfected corporeality promised to all Christians on Judgement Day ('L'ame li mist ou cors; | *et bel le rassambla*').<sup>665</sup> Unlike the other saints I have explored, Mary leaves no sacred corpse on earth to act as a relic, an accessible, corporeal connection between her heavenly presence and those on earth seeking her intercession.<sup>666</sup> Herman's *L'Assomptions* presents Mary as entirely resident in heaven, her body out of reach of the ordinary faithful.

Gautier's *Miracles* displays a similar investment in Mary's divine corporeality to that presented by Herman. The echoes between the two texts are underscored by their grouping and presentation in *L*: *L'Assomptions* begins directly after Gautier's text in the same hand, the *Miracles* and *L'Assomptions* forming a textual unit intended to be circulated together in this manuscript.<sup>667</sup> Yet, in contrast to Herman, for Gautier, the absence of Mary's corpse from earth does not impede a longing for forms of contact with her:

Curez est luez de cors *et* d'ame

Cil et celes cui nostre dame

Daigne atouchier nes de son doit

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(fols 36<sup>r</sup>- 292<sup>r</sup>) ; *L'Assomptions Nostre Dame* by Herman (fols 292<sup>r</sup>-299<sup>v</sup>). The manuscript also contains a verse translation of Jerome's letter to Eustochium on virginity in a different hand (fols 300<sup>r</sup>-325<sup>v</sup>), edited by Tauno Nurmela as *Traduction en vers français du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle de l'épître de saint Jérôme à Eustochium* (Helsinki: Academia scientiarum, 1947)).

<sup>664</sup> Spiele identifies Herman's sources as part of the *Transitu beatae Mariae* tradition first recorded in early Christian Syriac, pp. 101-03. She details thirty-five manuscripts preserving all or part of Herman's text, *Li Romanz de Dieu*, pp. 145-54.

<sup>665</sup> On the Assumption, see Rubin, *Mother of God*, p. 139.

<sup>666</sup> Marina Warner argues that Mary's lack of relics delayed the development of her cult, *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary* (London: Picador, 1976), p. 82.

<sup>667</sup> The two texts are written in the same hand, ending and beginning in the same column of fol. 292<sup>r</sup>. *L* is one of a number of manuscripts in which Gautier's collection is preserved alongside vernacular narrative texts recounting the lives of Mary and Christ. On *L'Assomptions* and its relation to Gautier's work, see Olivier Collet, 'L'Oeuvre en contexte: la place de Gautier de Coinci dans les recueils cycliques des *Miracles de Nostre Dame*', in *Gautier de Coinci*, ed. by Krause and Stones, pp. 21-36 (p. 27); Masami Okubo, 'Autour de la *Nativité Nostre Dame* et de son attribution à Gautier de Coinci (première partie)', *Romania*, 121 (2003), 348-81 (p. 329).

[...]

La mere dieu a si sainz doys

Si bialz. si blanz. si lonz si droys

*Que* garis *est* tout maintenant

Cui ele en touche maintenant

(II Mir 25 *Comment nostre dame rendi un homme le piet*, ll. 25-34)<sup>668</sup>

For Gautier, the slightest touch of Mary's finger upon the faithful man or woman is a vehicle for miracle working, granting healing in body and soul. Despite Mary's physical absence, Gautier nonetheless imagines a form of touch between saint and supplicant that has physical and spiritual consequences for devotees.

The nature of the contact with Mary Gautier describes, and the body with which that contact occurs, is not straightforward. Gautier's insistence on Mary's touch (27, 34), acquires a particularly corporeal quality, emphasised by the attention he pays to the beauty of Mary's healing fingers ('si sainz doys | Si bialz. si blanz. si lonz si droys' (31-32)). This lingering description, its emphatic repetition of 'si' underscoring Mary's superlative beauty, recalls depictions of women's bodies in romance and lyric, tapping into literary traditions that praised Mary in terms that mingle the spiritual and the erotic.<sup>669</sup> Gautier plays with the physicality and desirability of Mary's body, emphasising its tangibility and cultivating a yearning for its miraculous touch on the part of the faithful reader. While here Gautier emphasises eroticised, body-to-body contact, the miracle text from which this passage is extracted explores a more expansive contact with Mary that goes beyond the body. The miracle describes how its afflicted protagonist is granted healing by the touch of

<sup>668</sup> *Les Miracles de Nostre Dame*, L, fol. 233<sup>v</sup>. Line numbers refer to Koenig's edition.

<sup>669</sup> A typical example of this tradition can be found in the homilies devoted to Mary produced by the twelfth-century Cistercian founder Bernard of Clairvaux, one of the most influential figures in later medieval Marian writing. Bernard depicts Mary as the beautiful object of (God's) desire, highlighting her physical beauty and the eroticised desire it can provoke: 'Virginem [...] cuius decorem [Deus] concupierat' (Homilia III. 2), *Homilia in laudibus virginis matris*, in *Sancti Bernardi opera*, ed. by Jean Leclercq and H. Rochais, 8 vols (Rome: Editiones cistercienses, 1957-77), IV (1966), pp. 13-58 (p. 37). Translated by Marie-Bernard Saïd as 'the Virgin [...] whose beauty he ardently desired' (III. 2), *Homilies in Praise of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1990), p. 35. Bernard draws on biblical imagery from Psalm 44. 12 (45. 12 in the modern Bible): 'concupiscet rex decorem tuum quia ipse est dominus tuus' ('And the king shall greatly desire thy beauty; for he is the Lord thy God'). On Mary's eroticism in the *Miracles*, see Tasmina Foehr-Janssens, 'Histoire poétique du péché: de quelques figures littéraires de la faute dans les *Miracles de Nostre Dame* de Gautier de Coinci', in *Gautier de Coinci*, ed. by Krause and Stones, pp. 215-26 (p. 219).

a vision of Mary obtained through veneration of the contact relic of Mary's slipper (104-07, 265-95). Within this single miracle tale, Gautier explores a variety of potential ways of accessing Mary's sacred presence that complicate the means through which contact might be obtained.

Gautier's negotiation of these questions of what Mary's saintly body is and what contact with this body might mean is the focus of this chapter. I argue that contact with Mary lies at the heart of Gautier's composition, which presents this contact as the route to spiritual and physical transformation.<sup>670</sup> The removal of Mary's corpse does not impede contact with her, but represents a productive absence that allows Gautier to explore expansive conceptions of what both 'contact' and 'the body' might encompass. The *Miracles* explore material substitutes that express and enable contact with Mary: contact relics, reliquaries, images, the bodies of other saints and faithful supplicants, the text and book itself. In quantitative terms, in Gautier's collection miracles centring on images or apparitions outweigh those dedicated to relics.<sup>671</sup> Nevertheless, I demonstrate, relics remain a significant component in Mary's medieval cult as Gautier depicts it. Eight of Gautier's fifty-eight miracles are dedicated to Marian relics: four to the Soissons slipper relic (II Mir 22-25) and four to the Laon reliquary (II Mir 14-17). The slipper relic and Laon reliquary form the focus of my discussion in sections two and three respectively. In addition, a number of miracles explore other saints' relics. In section one, I focus on two miracles (I Mir 11, I Mir 44) devoted to Saint Leocadia's relics.<sup>672</sup> In the final section, I turn to Gautier's use of relics and saintly bodies to reflect on his own

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<sup>670</sup> My argument for the primacy of tangibility in Gautier contrasts with the emphasis placed on his work's visual aspects by scholars such as Camille, *The Gothic Idol*, p. 224, and Krause, who underlines the importance of seeing Mary in the collection, 'Gazing on Women in the *Miracles de Notre Dame*', in *Gautier de Coinci*, ed. by Krause and Stones, pp. 227-51 (p. 227).

<sup>671</sup> Twenty-seven of Gautier's fifty-seven miracle tales feature images (both statues and icons) in prominent roles as focuses for devotion and prayer, channels for intercession, and workers of miracles themselves. François-Jérôme Beaussart argues that within the *Miracles* the laity are more likely to encounter Mary through relics, while the religious receive direct apparitions, although as he acknowledges, this division is not clear cut, 'Visionnaires et apparitions dans les *Miracles de Notre Dame* de Gautier de Coinci', *Romance Philology*, 43 (1989), 241-57 (p. 246). Twelve miracles feature visionary apparitions alone, but many other miracles feature visions in addition to encounters with images or relics. Indeed I argue below for a lack of distinction of value between means of experiencing Mary.

<sup>672</sup> In addition to Leocadia's relics, I Mir 11 *D'un archevesque qui fu a Tholete* also recounts miracles performed by the relics of Saints Sebastian and Gregory; II Mir 11 *De saint Basile* narrates a miracle performed through the contact relics of Saint Mercurius.

composition. This imagery, I argue, enables Gautier to assert his text as a point of contact with Mary, a Marian relic in its own right.

Throughout, the collection pays sustained attention to its own textuality: its composition, transmission, and authorship.<sup>673</sup> I return at the end of this chapter to questions of how the *Miracles* as text intersect with depictions of Mary's sacred materiality. In order to provide a context for this discussion, and in recognition of the collection's prevailing concerns with its own production and circulation, I briefly survey here the *Miracles*' composition and transmission. Gautier, a Benedictine monk (c. 1177/78-1236) from the Soissonnais region where he would spend his life at the monastery of Saint-Médard in Soissons and the nearby Vic-sur-Aisne priory, composed the *Miracles* in several iterations c. 1218-33.<sup>674</sup> Over 30,000 lines in length, the *Miracles*' octosyllabic miracles are divided into two books and framed within a series of prologues, epilogues, songs, and prayers.<sup>675</sup> The *Miracles* draw on a wide variety of Latin sources, and although Gautier positions his collection as a translation (II Mir 30 *De l'ymage Nostre Dame de Sardanei*, 13-14) he adapts his material freely in both content and linguistic embellishment.<sup>676</sup> He follows each miracle with his own moralisation and a series of elaborately punning lines, which

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<sup>673</sup> On Gautier's authorship, see Michelle Bolduc, *The Medieval Poetics of Contraries* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006), p. 55; Tony Hunt, *Miraculous Rhymes: The Writing of Gautier de Coinci* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2007), pp. 4, 15.

<sup>674</sup> For Gautier's biography see Donna Mayer-Martin, 'Soissons and the Royal Abbey of Saint-Médard: Historical Contexts for the Life and Works of Gautier de Coinci', in *Medieval Paradigms: Essays in Honor of Jeremy Duquesnay Adams*, ed. by S. Hayes-Healy, 2 vols (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), II (2005), pp. 147-67 (pp. 158-60). On the *Miracles*' dating, see Arlette P. Ducrot-Granderye, *Études sur les Miracles Nostre Dame de Gautier de Coinci* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedekatemia, 1932; repr. Geneva: Slatkine, 1980), p. 159.

<sup>675</sup> On music in the *Miracles*, see Frédéric Billiet, 'Gautier de Coinci est-il un compositeur?', in *Gautier de Coinci*, ed. by Krause and Stones, pp. 127-47; Barbara Haggh, 'From Auxerre to Soissons: The Earliest History of the Responsory *Gaude, Maria Virgo* in Gautier de Coinci's *Miracles de Nostre Dame*', in *Gautier de Coinci*, ed. by Krause and Stones, pp. 167-93. For the songs' transmission, see Kathryn A. Duys, 'Appendix II: Manuscripts that Preserve the Songs of Gautier de Coinci's *Miracles de Nostre Dame*', in *Gautier de Coinci*, ed. by Krause and Stones, pp. 367-68.

<sup>676</sup> For Gautier's sources, see Adolfo Mussafia, *Über die von Gautier de Coincy benützten Quellen* (Vienna: Tempsky, 1894). On his translation techniques, see François-Jérôme Beaussart, "'D'un clerc grief malade que nostre dame sana": réflexions sur un miracle', *Médiévales*, 2 (1982), 33-46 (p. 38); Peter-Michael Spangenberg, 'Transformations du savoir et ambivalences fonctionnelles: aspects de la fascination hagiographique chez Gautier de Coincy', *Médiévales*, 2 (1982), 11-32 (pp. 18-19).



play on a single word or sound in a way that demonstrates his virtuoso command of the vernacular.<sup>677</sup>

Although Gautier's *Miracles* are the first Marian miracle collection to be composed in continental French, his work is situated in a long tradition of Latin Marian miracle collecting that saw particular growth from the early twelfth century.<sup>678</sup> In addition to Gautier's work four other vernacular collections survive from the late twelfth to mid-thirteenth centuries, produced in England and France.<sup>679</sup> These collections transmit variations of popular miracles found in many collections, including Gautier's, and at least one continental example drew directly on Gautier.<sup>680</sup>

<sup>677</sup> Hunt, *Miraculous Rhymes*, p. 19; Pierre Kunstmann, 'L'Annominatio chez Gautier: vocabulaire et syntaxe', in *Gautier de Coinci*, ed. by Krause and Stones, pp. 101-12 (p. 112).

<sup>678</sup> Mussafia traces the development of Marian miracle traditions in *Studien zu den mittelalterlichen Marienlegenden*, 5 vols (Vienna: Tempsky, 1887-98). Pierre Kunstmann counts over 2000 extant Latin miracles, and an additional 490 in Old French verse, *Vierge et merveille: les miracles de Notre-Dame narratifs au Moyen Age* (Paris: Union Générale d'éditions, 1981), p. 20. Marian miracles were popular across western Europe, but found particular success in this period in France and England: see respectively Paul Meyer, 'Notice sur un manuscrit d'Orléans contenant d'anciens miracles de la Vierge en vers français', *Notice et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque nationale et autres bibliothèques*, 34.2 (1895), 31-56 (p. 31); R. W. Southern, 'The English Origins of the "Miracles of the Virgin"', *Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies*, 4 (1958), 176-216 (pp. 176, 205).

<sup>679</sup> These are: Adgar's Anglo-Norman *Gracial* (1150-1200), surviving in London, British Library, MS Additional 38664 (1225-75, fols 3<sup>r</sup>-16<sup>v</sup>); London, British Library, MS Egerton 612 (early thirteenth century, fols 1<sup>r</sup>-75<sup>r</sup>); Dulwich, Dulwich College Library, MS 22, edited by Pierre Kunstmann (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1982). For Adgar's sources and dating, see Emma Béarat, 'The Authority of Diversity: Communal Patronage in *Le Gracial*', in *Barking Abbey*, ed. by Brown and Bussell, pp. 210-32 (pp. 210-13). An anonymous Anglo-Norman collection, preserved in the late thirteenth- or early fourteenth-century London, British Library, MS Royal 20 B XIV (fols 102<sup>v</sup>-170<sup>f</sup>, 173), edited by Hilding Kjellman as *La Deuxième Collection anglo-normande des miracles de la sainte Vierge* (Paris: Champion, 1922). This collection is translated from a Latin collection found in Oxford, Balliol College Library, MS 240, *La Deuxième Collection*, p. xvii; Roger Mynors, *Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Balliol College Oxford* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), pp. 261. A mid-thirteenth-century Lyonnais collection survives in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 818 (I) (fols 20r-125v). See Henri-Victor Michelant and others, *Catalogue des manuscrits français: ancien fonds*, 5 vols (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1868-1902), I (1878), pp. 86-88. Paul Meyer edits three of these miracles in 'Notice sur le recueil de miracles de la Vierge renfermé dans le MS. Bibl. nat. Fr. 818', *Notice et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque nationale et autres bibliothèques*, 34.2 (1895), 57-88. Finally, Jean le Marchant's *Miracles de Notre-Dame de Chartres* (1252-62), is preserved in Chartres, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 1027 (fourteenth century, produced in Chartres), and edited by Pierre Kunstmann (Ottawa: Université d'Ottawa, 1973). Jean's Latin source does not survive. On the Chartres miracles, see Margot E. Fassler, *The Virgin of Chartres: Making History through Liturgy and the Arts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

<sup>680</sup> Jean le Marchant's Miracle I, 'De Gondree et comment Notre Dame s'apela dame de Chartres' and Miracle XXX, 'De Robert de Joï' adapt respectively Gautier's II Mir 24 *De Gondree, comment Nostre Dame li rendi son nez*, and II Mir 25 *Comment Nostre Dame rendi un homme le piet.* with all mentions of Soissons replaced with Chartres and its

Gautier participates, then, in a vibrant and enduring textual network: by the time of his composition, there was a great body of common miraculous stories about Mary to draw on, and his text continued to influence the work of subsequent compilers.<sup>681</sup> In contrast to other contemporary vernacular collections, Gautier's work enjoyed widespread and lasting success: 114 manuscripts preserve some portion of his text, of which seventeen transmit the collection as a whole.<sup>682</sup> The greatest concentration of manuscript production dates from the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, and is situated in northern France, especially Gautier's native Soissonnais and the Île-de-France.<sup>683</sup> Copies were produced and owned in both monastic and lay commercial contexts.<sup>684</sup> Many of the *Miracles*' manuscripts are richly illustrated

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'chemise' relic (Jean, XXX, l. 444) substituted for the Soissonnais 'saint soller' (Gautier, *Piet*, l. 450). On the chemise relic, see E. Jane Burns, 'Saracen Silk and the Virgin's Chemise: Cultural Crossings in Cloth', *Speculum*, 81 (2006), 365-96.

<sup>681</sup> In addition, a number of miracles survive isolated or incorporated into other collections such as the *Vie des Pères*, Meyer, 'Notice sur un manuscrit d'Orléans', pp. 32-34.

<sup>682</sup> Catalogued by Duys, Krause and Stones, pp. 346-49. I adopt the manuscript *sigla* established by Ducrot-Granderye, p. 17. The *Miracles*' seventeen 'complete' manuscripts are: Besançon, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 551 (*T*) (c. 1260-70?, southern France); Blois, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 34 (*A*) (c. 1270-80, Soissons, Laon, or Noyon); Brussels, Bibliothèque royale, MS A1 10747 (*B*) (fols 1<sup>r</sup>-211<sup>v</sup>, c. 1260-80, Paris?); London, British Library, MS Harley 4401 (*C*) (mid-thirteenth century); Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 3517-3518 (*D*) (fols 8<sup>r</sup>-101<sup>r</sup>, 140bis<sup>r</sup>-186<sup>v</sup>; 1<sup>r</sup>-76<sup>v</sup>, c. 1270-80, Théroüanne, Saint-Omer, or Arras?); Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 817 (*E*) (fols 1<sup>r</sup>-170<sup>r</sup>, 1465, eastern France); Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 986 (*F*) (c. 1260?, Soissons, Laon, or Noyon); Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 1530 (*G*) (c. 1225-50?, Soissons, Laon, or Noyon); Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 1533 (*H*) (37<sup>r</sup>-263<sup>v</sup>, c. 1280, Paris); Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 1536 (*I*) (fols 1<sup>v</sup>-248<sup>v</sup>, c. 1280-1300, Arras); Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 1613 (*K*) (c. 1250-60?, Soissons or Cambrai?); Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 2163 (*M*) (1266, Morigny); BnF, MS français 22928 (*L*) (fols 36<sup>r</sup>-292<sup>r</sup>, late thirteenth century, Soissons, Laon, or Noyon); Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 25532 (*N*) (fols 7<sup>r</sup>-227<sup>r</sup>, c. 1260-70, Soissons, Laon, or Noyon); Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS nouvelles acquisitions françaises 24541 (*S*) (1328-34, Paris); Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Pal. Lat. 1969 (*O*) (early fourteenth century, Soissons, Laon, or Noyon); St Petersburg, National Library of Russia, MS fr. F. v. XIV 9 (*R*) (fols 40<sup>r</sup>-249<sup>r</sup>, c. 1260-70?, Soissons, Laon, or Noyon). Dates and provenances from Alison Stones, 'Appendix IV: Illustrated *Miracles de Nostre Dame* Manuscripts Listed by Stylistic Attribution and Attributable Manuscripts whose *MND* Selection is Unillustrated', in *Gautier de Coinci*, ed. by Krause and Stones, pp. 374-96.

<sup>683</sup> Duys, Krause, and Stones, pp. 353-57. *M*, the earliest securely datable manuscript, was produced in 1266 by the monk Guillaume de Morigny, and *E*, the latest, in 1465 by Marguerite de Chauvigny, Ducrot-Granderye, pp. 37-41, 48-52. Exceptionally *T* was produced in southern France, Stones, 'Appendix IV', pp. 374-96 (p. 392, n. 70).

<sup>684</sup> See Alison Stones, 'Appendix VI: Owners of *Miracles de Nostre Dame* Manuscripts', in *Gautier de Coinci*, ed. by Krause and Stones, pp. 407-42. Two examples of the *Miracles*' fifteenth-century ownership demonstrate the range of its medieval readers: Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 5204 (*g*), belonging to the church of Saint-Quentin, Masami

luxury items.<sup>685</sup> The *Miracles*' manuscript transmission emphasises the text's extensive mobility and longevity, connecting a broad community of readers throughout western Europe.

When it comes to individual exemplars, the *Miracles*' manuscripts vary widely in the selection and order of individual miracle texts transmitted. The *Miracles* are not a stable entity, but a shifting collection of constituent texts that are assembled into different configurations in different manuscript redactions.<sup>686</sup> Any systematic overview of the *Miracles*' extensive corpus is beyond the scope of this chapter; my discussion draws on a small selection of material from three late thirteenth-century illustrated exemplars, focusing particularly on *L*.<sup>687</sup> While this selective approach is pragmatic, it is also a means of further exploring the usefulness of network thinking for this medieval material. Throughout my thesis I have paid attention to the materiality of texts, considering elements such as a manuscript's material composition, illustration, and traces of reader responses as part of the network that conveys the sacred meaning of the text and the saintly body it describes.<sup>688</sup> As I explored in Chapter One, ANT expands the understanding of agency in a way that encompasses nonhuman as well as human actants.<sup>689</sup> In these terms, each manuscript is an ad hoc assemblage in which agency is distributed across multiple human and nonhuman entities. The entities that make up a manuscript –

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Okubo, 'La Formation de la collection des *Miracles* de Gautier de Coinci (première partie)', *Romania*, 123 (2005), 141-212 (p. 183, n. 121); and *H*, owned by Agnes of Burgandy, Duchess of Bourbon (1407-1476), Ducrot-Granderye, pp. 57-58. Okubo argues that there was a monastic atelier at Gautier's own Saint-Médard producing the interrelated manuscripts *L*, *N*, and *R*, 'La Formation de la collection des *Miracles* de Gautier de Coinci (seconde partie)', p. 416. On the other hand, *S* was produced in Jean Pucelle's Parisian atelier 1324-34 for Jeanne de Bourgogne (1293-1349), Stones, 'Appendix VI', p. 415.

<sup>685</sup> Twenty-nine manuscripts contain illustrations, Alison Stones, 'Notes on the Artistic Context of Some Gautier de Coinci Manuscripts', in *Gautier de Coinci*, ed. by Krause and Stones pp. 65-98 (p. 65).

<sup>686</sup> Ardis Butterfield, 'Gautier de Coinci, *Miracles de Nostre Dame*: Texts and Manuscripts', in *Gautier de Coinci*, ed. by Krause and Stones, pp. 1-18 (pp. 5, 8). Okubo traces both Gautier's overarching concern for the wholeness and symmetry of his collection, and the *Miracles*' shifting fluidity as Gautier performs a series of revisions and expansions over time, 'La Formation de la collection des *Miracles* de Gautier de Coinci (seconde partie)', pp. 441-54.

<sup>687</sup> In addition to *L*, the manuscripts discussed are: BnF, MS français 1533 (*H*); and BnF, MS français 25532 (*N*). The corpus displays a great variety in the texts and episodes selected for illustration; these manuscripts were selected primarily for the interest of their illustrations of the *Miracles*' relic miracles, and for the traces of reader interaction they display.

<sup>688</sup> See Chapter One, pp. 102-09; Chapter Two, pp. 169-76.

<sup>689</sup> See Chapter One, pp. 61-76.

words; images; decoration; parchment; ink; gold illumination; the human hands of scribes, illustrators, readers – all have their own associations, trajectories, and agencies, which work in concert (and at times compete) to produce the book. In this chapter's final section I consider more closely how the multiple, entangled components of particular manuscripts might condition readers to respond to the book as an expression of saintly agency, presence, and body.

If ANT is helpful for thinking through the formal, material properties of the *Miracles*' manuscripts, my discussion of how the *Miracles* enlist Mary in diverse networks to produce forms of contact with her presence is also inflected by Latour's more recent development of the network in *Enquête sur les modes d'existence: une anthropologie des Modernes* (2013). *Enquête* both builds on and critiques ANT, focusing more explicitly on the questions of ontology – as well as of agency and relationality – raised by Latour's efforts to disrupt what he identifies as modern western European assumptions about the world: binary oppositions between humans and nonhumans; the material world and human subjectivity; true, objective scientific knowledge and the 'alternative rationalities' of other cultures or religions.<sup>690</sup> While ANT suggests the relational model of the network as a means of overcoming these oppositions, Latour's more recent work proposes a plurality of 'modes of existence', modes which can intersect but which each have their own trajectories and conditions of 'veridiction' through which truth and falsity are defined and existence established.<sup>691</sup> Networks in *Enquête* are both a mode of being in their own right (which Latour designates with the code [NET]) and a sort of preliminary prototype for other modes (examples of which include the modes of religion [REL], technology [TEC], and science [REF]).<sup>692</sup> Every course of action, he writes, can be grasped as a network, but the task is now to move beyond the discovery of networks of association to identify the 'type of value that seems to circulate in a particular

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<sup>690</sup> Latour, *Inquiry*, pp. 8, 13, 63-64. Like many of the theoretical works I have drawn on, the *Enquête* has limitations for engaging with the Middle Ages. The modern assumptions about materiality, humanity, science, and religion to which Latour sets up his work in opposition are often not relevant for the Middle Ages: for example the assumption that science is privileged over religion as means of accessing truth, or indeed that the two are separate domains at all. See Campbell, 'Sound and Vision'.

<sup>691</sup> Latour, *Inquiry*, pp. 18, 20-21, 53-54. Latour also examines 'crossing points' in which two modes intersect, p. 73.

<sup>692</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35; [NET] is translated from the French [RES], for réseau. Latour assigns his modes three letter code-words to distinguish them from traditional understandings of each term: for example, beings of religion [REL] are not to be confused with traditional understandings of the domain of Religion.

network'.<sup>693</sup> The trajectories of each mode 'have the same general form as those of a [network]', but each leads to a specific 'type of continuity' and a specific mode of verification that distinguishes it from other modes of being.<sup>694</sup>

*Enquête*'s move from identifying networks of association to thinking in terms of what circulates within networks and the types of being they call into existence is useful for tackling the interwoven questions of contact and saintly presence raised in the passage from the *Miracles* discussed above. In particular, *Enquête* will inform my exploration of how relational networks of contact – such as the yearning for Mary's touch expressed by Gautier – raise questions about the nature of Mary's being and presence. Latour's insistence on the differing conditions of veridiction proper to each mode takes seriously the ways in which spiritual beings such as Mary have an existence that needs to be judged on its own terms. Spiritual beings in the religious mode [REL] are, in Latour's account, as real as those beings that have a more immediately observable material presence (for example the entities that form the basis of scientific enquiry).<sup>695</sup> Indeed Latour resists any absolute separation of the spiritual and the material world: *Enquête* reiterates that for Latour religion is precisely not about transcending the world, but about paying attention to and providing access to what is proximate.<sup>696</sup> [REL], like Latour's other modes, articulates and constitutes the world, rather than occupying a realm beyond or separate from it.<sup>697</sup> In *Enquête* Latour redefines transcendence not as a supreme movement beyond the material world to a higher one, a movement that stands in opposition to the immanence of the world, but rather as the multiple differences and leaps between entities of all kinds – human and nonhuman alike – within networks.<sup>698</sup> Thus transcendence is the property of all entities and all modes.<sup>699</sup> Medieval hagiography – a genre in which saints inhabit the material world, and where material bodies, artefacts, and landscapes embody and enact divine agencies –

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<sup>693</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37, 61.

<sup>694</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42.

<sup>695</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 308; see also Latour, "'Thou Shalt Not Take the Lord's Name in Vain'", pp. 217-18, 229-30.

<sup>696</sup> Latour, *Inquiry*, p. 322; "'Thou Shall Not Freeze-Frame'", p. 36. See discussion in Miller, *Speculative Grace*, p. 119.

<sup>697</sup> Latour, *Inquiry*, p. 299. See discussion in Campbell, 'Sound and Vision'.

<sup>698</sup> Latour, *Inquiry*, p. 210; Miller, *Speculative Grace*, pp. 41, 43.

<sup>699</sup> Latour, *Inquiry*, p. 210; Miller, *Speculative Grace*, p. 33.

offers countless examples of the interconnectedness of spiritual beings and the world that Latour describes.<sup>700</sup>

In particular, I will argue, Gautier's depiction of Mary draws attention to the presence of the sacred in the material world, in what is proximate, accessible, and tangible for his medieval readers. In the absence of a human corpse, Mary's presence is throughout the *Miracles* repeatedly expanded to encompass alternative bodies and material artefacts (such as contact relics, other saints' relics, reliquaries, the faithful), as well as her more intangible qualities and agencies (her intercessory function, her purity, her beauty). Central to the *Miracles*' construction of Mary as present in the world are the ways in which the *Miracles* as text participate in bringing Mary into being alongside the bodies and objects within its pages. Latour's critique of the modern separation of the 'real' material world of things and the realm of signs, words, and representation offers a helpful way of viewing Mary's presence in Gautier's work. Language for Latour is not privileged or opposed to an objective, material reality which it represents, but is connected to, and indeed constitutive of it. Words are not projected onto the material world, but are one of the interconnected ways in which the world articulates itself and thus comes into being.<sup>701</sup> Likewise, nonhuman, nonlinguistic entities are not excluded from this work of world-making, but produce the real through the trajectories and connections they forge with other entities.<sup>702</sup> Taking my cue from Latour, I argue that the artefacts within the *Miracles* and the text of the *Miracles* itself not only represent Mary, but are also interconnected articulations of her that make her present and tangible to the faithful. In contrast, then, to the passage from Herman's *L'Assomption* which opened this chapter, in Gautier's *Miracles* Mary is not a remote being residing in a heavenly elsewhere, but a being in and of the world. Mary's presence is located not in her absent body, but in an expansive, shifting, porous multitude of networks, entities, and agencies that incorporate artefacts, texts, and human agents.

In the *Miracles*, Mary's presence is produced and sustained through repeated transformations and re-actualisations in saintly and ordinary bodies, crafted reliquaries, relics, images, spoken and written words. While, as I will argue, these

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<sup>700</sup> In the following sections of this chapter, I will reflect in greater detail on the potential limitations of Latour's understanding of religion for dealing with medieval Christianity, and the Virgin Mary in particular.

<sup>701</sup> Latour, *Inquiry*, pp. 145-46, see Campbell, 'Sound and Vision'.

<sup>702</sup> Latour, *Pandora's Hope*, pp. 141-42. See discussion in Miller, *Speculative Grace*, p. 70.

diverse entities all generate Mary's presence, they do so in ways that diverge by virtue of their different forms, components, and materialities. Maintaining a broad sense of the interconnected ways Mary's presence is produced and transmitted, I explore how individual entities (from Mary's sacred objects to her venerators' bodies) make and participate in a proliferation of intersecting yet distinct local networks. These local networks might include for example those of the materials, bodies, and labour that construct a sacred artefact, or those forged between body and object when an artefact is kissed and touched in a moment of veneration.<sup>703</sup> Returning to the passage from *Piet* quoted above gives a sense of the complexities of Mary's expansive presence and the sort of local networks formed in the *Miracles*. Gautier's description of the curative properties of Mary's touch ('*Que garis est tout maintenant | Cui ele en touche maintenant*' (33-34)) describes a moment of real contact with Mary in which her presence is expressed at once through an implicit physicality and through a broader set of agencies centred on her intercessory ability to heal. The contact generated with Mary's presence and agency is experienced by the devotee's body and soul, hinting at the intimate connections that can be forged between the faithful and Mary ('*Curez est luez de cors et d'ame*' (25)). Moreover, this is a contact that transforms the faithful, enacting spiritual and physical healing. In the *Miracles* Mary is not bound to an absent corpse withdrawn from the world, but is tangibly present on earth, repeatedly re-actualised as needed to provide the transformative contact, access, and intercession for which her devotees yearn.

### **Transmitting Mary: images and bodies**

The ways in which Mary is brought into being through an intertwining set of agencies and engagement with material bodies are vividly illustrated by Gautier's depiction of Mary's *ymages* (denoting both two- and three-dimensional images). Given Mary's lack of corporeal relics, images play an important role in her cult, one that increases in the later Middle Ages.<sup>704</sup> In principal, images and relics manifest

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<sup>703</sup> See Knappett on the sensory networks of the human body, pp. 63-69.

<sup>704</sup> In this, Mary's lack of a single corpse was a spur for her cult's development, allowing for a decentred spread of multiple, proliferating images, see Robert Maniura, 'Persuading the

saintly presence in contrasting ways: images mimetically represent the saint's body while relics embody it, without necessarily resembling the saintly form.<sup>705</sup> In practice, however, these categories frequently bleed into each other, as relics are supported by visually rich surrounds and images house inserted relic fragments.<sup>706</sup> Gautier describes multiple miraculous images that demonstrate a lack of difference between images and relics: Mary's *ymages* move (I Mir 21 *De l'enfant qui mist l'anel ou doit l'ymage*, 61-62), speak (II Mir 18 *Dou giuis qui recut l'ymage Dieu en wages*, 447), even grow breasts (I Mir 32 *De l'ymage Nostre Dame*, 59-63). In *Sardanei*, Gautier depicts two *ymages* that blur lines between image and body, as they miraculously exude fluid: an icon which secretes heavenly oil (468-69), and a bleeding stone statue recently observed by Gautier's acquaintances (643-50). The oil and the blood emitted by Mary's images produce healing miracles and are treated as relics in their own right: the oil ('la likeur' (622)) is made into relics ('hauz saintuaires' (624)), as is the blood ('Grant saintuaire dou sanc firent' (656)).<sup>707</sup> Distinctions between relic and image, what is of Mary's body and what represents it, dissolve. Mary's *ymages* speak directly to Latour's claim that works of art and other forms of representation are not separate from reality, but rather generate it: as Adam Miller puts it, Latour's representations 'do not shadow the real, they manufacture it'.<sup>708</sup> Mary's *ymages* are not imitative references to a 'real' body from which they are separate, but are one of the many entangled ways in which Mary is articulated as

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Absent Saint: Image and Performance in Marian Devotion', *Critical Inquiry*, 35 (2009), 629-54 (p. 647).

<sup>705</sup> C. Stephen Jaeger, *Enchantment: On Charisma and the Sublime in the Arts of the West* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), p. 99.

<sup>706</sup> Mary's cult alone provides a wealth of examples of this blurring of boundaries between relics and images, from images of Mary believed to have been created by St Luke such as the *Salus Populi Romani* icon housed in Rome, to statues of the Virgin in majesty containing relic portions, to her many miracle-working images. On the lack of medieval distinction between images and relics, see Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image Before the Era of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 58, 299-301, 308; Sara Lipton, 'Images and their Uses', in *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, ed. by Margaret M. Mitchell and others, 9 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005-2009), IV: *Christianity in Western Europe, c. 1100-c. 1500*, ed. by Miri Rubin and Walter Simons (2009), pp. 254-82 (p. 259).

<sup>707</sup> Animated, living images of Mary are widely reported in medieval cult practice, see Katherine Allen Smith, 'Bodies of Unsurpassed Beauty: "Living" Images of the Virgin in the High Middle Ages', *Viator*, 37 (2006), 167-87 (p. 178).

<sup>708</sup> Latour, *Inquiry*, pp. 145-46, 256; Miller, *Speculative Grace*, p. 63.



present in the world.<sup>709</sup> This articulation of Mary as an *ymage* is centred on a shared participation in Mary's agency through the image's material form. These images enact Mary's intercession, behaving like the saint and like lively bodies that momentarily incarnate her in wood or stone.<sup>710</sup> Rather than establishing an opposition between relics and images, real and represented bodies, for the *Miracles* *ymages* are one of a series of entities in a network that enables the manifestation of Mary's material presence and the transmission of her sanctity.

The generation of Mary's real presence through *ymages* is driven home by the treatment of the illustrations of these *ymages* in the thirteenth-century northern French *Miracles* manuscript Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 25532 (N).<sup>711</sup> The large single-panel historiated initials that open each miracle in this codex depict numerous Marian icons and statues (Figure 38). As in Gautier's text, these visual images seem to produce and transmit something of Mary's sacred presence and intercessory power. Multiple illustrations of *ymages* have been cut out of their initials (Figure 39). The spaces left by these excisions have been mended in parchment: on the reverse of one mending, the lost text has been recopied in a hand very similar to the original, suggesting that these removals took place not long after the manuscript's creation (Figure 40).<sup>712</sup> Alison Stones suggests that such images were subtracted as independent amulets for devotional purposes, imbued with a sacred efficacy.<sup>713</sup> The particular focus of these excisions on illustrations of Mary's *ymages* – images of images – suggests that passage through multiple layers of mediation and representation poses no barriers to, indeed facilitates, the continued transmission of sacred presence and agency.<sup>714</sup>

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<sup>709</sup> This is of course not in line with the medieval theology of images, which justifies their use in devotional practice precisely for their ability to point beyond themselves to the prototype they depict, see Latour, "Thou Shall Not Freeze-Frame," pp. 39-40, 45-46.

<sup>710</sup> Jean-Marie Sansterre, 'La Vierge Marie et ses images chez Gautier de Coinci et Césaire de Heisterbach', *Viator*, 41 (2010), 147-78 (p. 162).

<sup>711</sup> This manuscript shares aspects of its decorative programme with *L*. The artist who worked on *N* also illustrated *R*, which is the model for *L*'s images. While there are similarities between the illustrations of *L* and *N*, *N* offers single-panel historiated initials at the opening of each miracle, in comparison to *L*'s multi-panel images. See Kathryn A. Duys, 'Minstrel's Mantle and Monk's Hood: The Authorial Persona of Gautier de Coinci in his Poetry and Illuminations', in *Gautier de Coinci*, ed. by Krause and Stones, pp. 37-63 (p. 51); Stones, 'Notes on the Artistic Context', pp. 73-79.

<sup>712</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>713</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>714</sup> See Latour, "Thou Shalt Not Take the Lord's Name in Vain", p. 224.



Figure 38. I Mir 13 *De la tavlete en coi l'ymage de la mere Dieu estoit peinte*, a Jewish man throws an image of Mary and Christ in a latrine, c. 1260-70, gold leaf and ink on parchment, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 25532 (N), fol. 37<sup>v</sup>.



Figure 39. II Mir 21 *Dou cierge qui descendi au jougleour*, a jongleur plays before an image of the Virgin (image removed and mended), c. 1260-70, gold leaf and ink on parchment, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 25532 (N), fol. 166<sup>r</sup>.

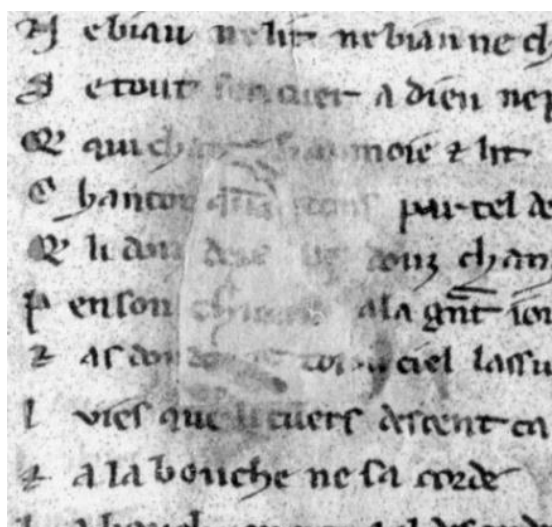


Figure 40. Recopying of text on reverse of repaired removal of image, c. 1260-70, ink on parchment, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 25532 (N), fol. 168<sup>r</sup>.

A sense of how sacred presence is maintained through networks of mediating entities is brought out in two miracles in which Gautier juxtaposes the corporeal relics of the virgin martyr saint Leocadia of Toledo (d. c. 304) with noncorporeal sacred entities such as images and objects. I Mir 11 *D'un archevesque qui fu a Tholete* recounts the miraculous opening of Leocadia's tomb and display of her incorrupt corpse to the archbishop Saint Ildefonsus (c. 607-667).<sup>715</sup> I Mir 44 *Comment sainte Leochade fu perdue*, the collection's only miracle tale with no Latin source, was composed by Gautier in the wake of the theft and recovery of Leocadia's relics and Mary's *ymage* from his priory of Vic-sur-Aisne in 1218.<sup>716</sup> These texts emphasise that continuity of saintly presence is not predicated on the continuous visual or material stability of the saintly body. The miracles, set around 600 years

<sup>715</sup> This is a version of a very popular miracle often included in Marian collections, see *La Deuxième Collection*, ed. by Kjellman, p. xi.

<sup>716</sup> This miraculous recovery prompted Gautier's composition of *Leochade*, three accompanying songs, and a substantial revision of *Tholete*, which he expanded from little more than 100 lines to over 2000, adding details about how her relics came to be in Vic-sur-Aisne, as well as a lengthy antisemitic diatribe (209-476). For the Leocadia songs, see Claire Chamiyé Couderc, 'L'Interprétation musicale du Cycle de sainte Léocade', in *Gautier de Coinci*, ed. by Krause and Stones, pp. 149-65. On Gautier's antisemitism, see Rubin, *Mother of God*, pp. 229-33, and on the antisemitic associations of Mary's medieval cult more broadly, Adrienne Williams Boyarin, *Miracles of the Virgin in Medieval England: Law and Jewishness in Marian Legends* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2010).

apart, stage the transformation of Leocadia's body over time and its subjection to linear processes of decomposition: while in *Tholete* the emphasis is on her incorrupt corpse, by the time in which *Leochade* is set, her relics are bare bones ('ses os' (798)). This bodily transformation is no impediment to the relics' miraculous effectiveness, or their connections with Leocadia. Throughout, Gautier emphasises the continuity between saint and relics, which are identified consistently as 'la virge' and 'Leochade' whether referring to her whole preserved corpse or her decomposed bones (*Tholete*, 135; *Leochade*, 190).<sup>717</sup> The capacity to embody and communicate Leocadia is engaged with the saint's corporeality, but this is not a corporeality tied to a stable, recognisable body.

Indeed, noncorporeal forms of matter are also enlisted in sustaining Leocadia's saintly presence. Ildefonsus, granted miraculous access to Leocadia's incorrupt corpse, cuts off a fragment of her chemise with the intention of preserving it, enshrining the fragment along with the knife he used to extract it (*Tholete*, 158-93).<sup>718</sup> The enshrinement of chemise and knife allows Ildefonsus and his community to prolong their contact with Leocadia, even after her corpse retreats into enclosure and invisibility: the community still venerates these relics, 'Encor en font haut saintuaire | Cil et celes de la contree' (192-93). Access to the saintly body is redirected through a network of noncorporeal objects that neither visually nor materially resemble the saint. Latour's observation that networks achieve continuity by passing through a series of discontinuities or hiatuses helpfully clarifies how this sense of formal and material discontinuity sustains rather than impedes continued access to the saint.<sup>719</sup> Networks, Latour stresses, not only describe the constitution of 'a discontinuous series of heterogeneous elements', but also 'something that circulates in a continuous fashion, once all the elements are in place'.<sup>720</sup> In Latour's terms, Leocadia's enduring presence is sustained by a network of discontinuous entities, of shifting material objects that do not resemble her living body, or each

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<sup>717</sup> See Peggy McCracken, 'Miracles, Mimesis, and the Efficacy of Images', in *Meaning and its Objects: Material Culture in Medieval and Renaissance France*, ed. by Margaret Burland, David Laguardia, and Andrea Tarnowski (= *Yale French Studies*, 110 (2006)), pp. 47-57, (p. 56).

<sup>718</sup> I discuss similar instances of a desire for extraction in regards to Eloi's miracle collecting (Chapter One, pp. 78-80), and Bishop Gundulf's translation of Edward the Confessor (Chapter Two, pp. 162-63).

<sup>719</sup> Latour, *Inquiry*, pp. 73, 100.

<sup>720</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

other: this layering of discontinuous mediations is precisely part of what it means to bring the saint into being.<sup>721</sup> Leocadia's continued saintly presence and contact with the faithful is maintained through a series of transformations that articulate her anew as body, bone, chemise, and reliquary. These constantly renewed articulations prolong the being of the saint within the network.

Importantly, the sacred contact offered by Leocadia's miracles not only sustains and transmits her own saintly presence, but also Mary's agency. The miraculous retrieval of Leocadia's relics after their theft and submersion in the Aisne river is described as Mary's work:

Quant renvoïe eut sa pucele,  
S'ymage, qui tant estoit bele,  
[...]  
Nos renvoia a mout grant joie.  
(*Leochade*, 469-72)

Mary performs the miracle of Leocadia's return: Leocadia's relics are an expression of Mary's miraculous agency. Here, Mary's retrieval of Leocadia (469) prefigures her retrieval of her own image (470-72), which was also stolen and recovered buried in a field some days later (479-81). As in *Sardanei*, there is little practical or material distinction between corporeal relics and Marian images, as these artefacts function and are treated in similar ways. Moreover, relics and image have a similar relationship to Mary – Leocadia's relics are described as 'sa pucele' and the image as 's'ymage'. The possessive pronoun suggests the image and relic belong to Mary, as outposts or extended expressions of her in a network of sacred entities that accumulate around her.

This sense of ownership suggests that the beings of medieval religion are invested in spiritual and ontological hierarchies that are absent from Latour's understanding of religion. In addition to resisting any ontological hierarchies between human and nonhuman, for Latour God 'has no special privilege' or inherent command over any other entity.<sup>722</sup> In *Enquête*, rather than describing an omniscient, omnipotent force beyond the world, 'God' names what circulates within religious

<sup>721</sup> Latour, "“Thou Shalt Not Take the Lord's Name in Vain”", p. 224.

<sup>722</sup> Latour, *Inquiry*, p. 315; *Pandora's Hope*, p. 298. See discussion in Miller, *Speculative Grace*, p. 18-19, 21.

networks.<sup>723</sup> As I discussed in Chapter One, medieval hagiography repeatedly explores the ways in which a medieval Christian understanding of the all-powerful, enabling, originary God that Latour discards is not incompatible with a simultaneous sense of how sacred, miraculous agency is also widely distributed across matter, things, and people.<sup>724</sup> A sense of how the *Miracles* envisage an originary, supreme God among a multiplicity of sacred intercessors is dramatised in its depictions of the heavenly court. The suggestion of possession or subordination between Mary and Leocadia takes up the vocabulary of courtly relationships: Leocadia and Mary mutually serve each other as maiden and lady ('Sa pucele iés, ele est ta dame' (*Tholete*, 2222)), part of a heavenly community. In *II Mir 19 De deus freres, Perron et Estene* Gautier explores how divine agency is translated through multiple saintly mediators:

Sainz Pris après mout humlement,  
Jointes mains, prie Nostre Dame  
Son doz fil deprit pout cele ame  
(140-42)

In this formulation, Christ is the ultimate source and arbiter of salvation, yet this salvation passes through a series of negotiations between hierarchically organised mediators, from Christ to Mary to Saint Pris to the ordinary sinner. This passage is a helpful demonstration of the ways in which the intercession performed by Mary and the saints enacts a tangled conglomeration of agencies in which what is of God and what is proper to them cannot be separated.<sup>725</sup> The proliferation of mediators that allow for the flow of divine agency to the faithful, expressed in terms of courtly hierarchies, reinforces the productive role of these networks in inscribing an all-powerful God as present and accessible in the world.

The relationship between Leocadia and Mary as maiden and lady is fuelled by Mary's role as model for *imitatio* by female saints.<sup>726</sup> Gautier fosters material and

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<sup>723</sup> Latour, *Inquiry*, p. 315. On Latour's disavowal of an all-powerful Creator God, see "'Thou Shalt Not Take the Lord's Name in Vain'", pp. 228-29.

<sup>724</sup> Chapter One, pp. 63-70.

<sup>725</sup> On Mary as mediator, see Clarissa W. Atkinson, *The Oldest Vocation: Christian Motherhood in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 134; Beaussart, 'Figures de la maladie', p. 75.

<sup>726</sup> Mary as originary model for female sanctity is a well-established topos in medieval writing, see for example discussion of Mary as model for Foy in Ashley and Sheingorn, *Writing Faith*, p. 88.

spiritual resemblances between Leocadia and Mary, describing them in similarly conventional terms for female saints. Like Mary, Leocadia is repeatedly identified as ‘pucele’, ‘virge’, ‘bele’, ‘douce’, ‘emmielee’, and as precious gemstones (*Leochade*, 5-15). Leocadia’s body and sanctity replicate those of Mary as her saintly model. The *Miracles* plays on these common descriptions of female saintly bodies to depict Leocadia not only as mimetically similar to Mary, but also as a sort of living, corporeal *ymage* or incarnation of Mary that transmits Mary’s presence and power. Leocadia’s body is an alternative expression of Mary’s presence and *virtus* that sits alongside images as an expression of her intercession to venerated. Body and images all participate in the enactment of Mary’s miraculous agency as complementary articulations of her.

Rather than conceptualising Leocadia simply in terms of her resemblance to Mary, the *Miracles* presents her as belonging to Mary in a network of female saints that collectively manifest Mary’s intercessory power. The hierarchically organised networks that gather around Mary contribute to the sense that her influence is expansive and easily transmissible. All virgins belong to and serve Mary, clustering around her:

Toutes virges sont ses puceles,  
 Ses meschines et ses aneles:  
 [...]
 La mere Dieu est la grans gemme,  
 [...]
 Qui tant est bele et tant est clere  
 Et tant d’esmerree matere  
 De sa biauté tuit cil resclairent  
 Qui entor li vont et repairent  
 (*Leochade*, 41-50)

This network of female virgin saints is bound together by Mary’s proximity and saintly attributes. In Latour’s terms, Mary is not only the element that brings this network together, but also that which continues to be transmitted through the network once it is in place.<sup>727</sup> It is not only Mary’s miraculous agency that is transmitted, but also an intangible presence that is Mary, extending Mary’s being

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<sup>727</sup> Latour, *Inquiry*, pp. 31-33.

beyond the boundaries of a single body. This presence is not tied to a corporeal body, but rather to the intangible quality of Mary's sacred beauty.<sup>728</sup> This passage describes how other saints reflect Mary's shining, gem-like beauty (45-50), suggesting that enlistment in Mary's network enables the absorption of something of her. Moreover, this sense of how proximity to Mary enables other saints to reflect her presence and her qualities renders these saints participants in a network, each of them transmitting Mary's sanctity outwards and radiating Mary's beauty independently of her individual body. Indeed, for Gautier, Mary is the source from which other saints' power springs: 'Lor puissance ist dou tien pooir' (I Mir 35 *D'un abbé qui nagoit en mer*, 131). All miracles flow from Mary and thus work to sustain, transmit, and make tangible Mary's own intercessory agency. Mary is the originary centre of networks forged through the flow of miraculous agency and her refracted beauty. Female saints are facets of Mary and Mary's nature acts, in turn, as part of a network that enhances her sanctity as an expansive force.

This passage also suggests that what is transmitted is not only agency or sanctity but something associated with Mary's physicality – a property that is not to be confused with human corporeality in a more conventional sense. The reflective transmission of Mary-as-gemstone is assured by her material make-up, her jewelled composition of shining material ('tant d'esmerée matere' (48)). What she reflects is enabled by her physicality as a shining jewel, indicating the importance of Mary's materiality for her articulations. Latour's examination of the religious mode centres on Logos, on asserting the reality of linguistic, invisible entities in the face of a modern separation of language or religious beings from an objective 'material world'.<sup>729</sup> In the *Miracles* Mary as spiritual being is similarly always entangled with and inseparable from her materiality. Again, the centrality of the Incarnation for medieval Christianity – the importance of the Word made flesh – rendered the material and, in particular, the human body an inextricable aspect of religious beings, from the devotional practices of the faithful, to the saints, to the embodied God himself.<sup>730</sup> Throughout the *Miracles* Gautier is invested in bringing Mary's physicality into being, not as an end in itself, but for the ways it is bound up with her

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<sup>728</sup> Latour's beings of religion are indeed explicitly not material or corporeal entities, *ibid.*, pp. 306, 308.

<sup>729</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 306.

<sup>730</sup> Atkinson, *The Oldest Vocation*, p. 5; Bynum, *Christian Materiality*, p. 33.



spiritual presence. As his articulation of Mary as shining gemstone indicates, Mary's materiality can be accessed in ways beyond the conventional contours of the human fleshy body. The *Miracles* shifts the terms of embodiment (or more precisely manifestation, actualisation, articulation, expression) away from a singular, unified corporeality to a fluid sense of Mary as materially diffuse and transformable. The fact that Mary is physically manifested is important, but her materiality need not be corporeal. Rather than being concentrated in a singular body resident in heaven, a corpse now absent from earth, Mary is distributed across a network of entities – including images and saintly bodies – that transmit her being, her presence, her sanctity, and act to constitute her expansive, (in)tangible body. Through the multiple, intersecting networks in which she circulates, Mary's presence and materiality extend beyond the borders of her body. The artefacts and bodies that make up this network are unique articulations of Mary that embody her, drawing her into tangible, concrete forms. These bodies, these expressions of Mary, I argue in the following sections, allow the faithful access to the broader intangible Marian networks to which they momentarily give tangible form.

### **Crafting the divine: the Laon reliquary**

One of the ways in which Gautier re-articulates Mary in diverse forms is through his use of metaphors that describe her as an array of nonhuman entities from a flower ('flors' (I Prologue 1, 91)) to a shield ('escus' (II Doutance 34 *De la misere d'omme et de fame et de la doutance qu'on doit avoir de morir*, 2586)). He particularly deploys metaphors that accentuate the sense of Mary's expansive nature outlined above, depicting Mary as an open, fluid space of interchange. She is the window and the door ('fenestre', 'porte' (*Leochade*, 52)) through which light travels, defined by an open permeability that allows divine light to pass through her.<sup>731</sup> She is the fountain and stream of divine mercy: 'la fontaine [...] la dois | Dont sort et vient misericorde' (I Prologue 1, 102-03), a phrasing that presents her as not only an originary source of divinity, but also the means through which the divine continues to be communicated. This prologue emphasises that Mary is not only something that

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<sup>731</sup> Here Gautier draws on a traditional image of Mary as *porta dei*, Bolduc, *The Medieval Poetics of Contraries*, p. 69.

is transmitted but is also the means through which transmission is achieved. She is a conduit through which all that is good flows: ‘C’est li tuiaus, c’est li conduis | Par ou tous biens est aconduis’ (I Prologue 1, 105-06). If Mary is transmitted through the networks she institutes, the metaphor of Mary as a channel for the divine draws attention to Mary as a means of mediation that allows connections to be forged between entities in a network, enabling the circulation of the divine.

Mary’s nature as transmitter of the divine is predicated in particular on the special role of her corporeality in the Incarnation, the enfleshing of God on Earth.<sup>732</sup> Christ’s suffering humanity, a humanity that was grounded in that of his mother’s body, was increasingly a subject of reflection and artistic depiction in the later Middle Ages.<sup>733</sup> The *Miracles* repeatedly represent Mary’s body as an enveloping space within which Christ takes on human form. Mary reminds Christ that his human flesh and blood originates in her body: ‘char et sanc prist en mon cors’ (I Mir 10 *Comment Theophilus vint a penitence*, 965); ‘Char en mes flans presis humaine’ (I Mir 24 *Dou Moigne que Nostre Dame resuscita*, 116). Addressing Mary, Gautier reinforces the essential role of her fleshy body in the Incarnation:

Qu’en ta char precieuse s’estoit Diex encharnez.

[...]

Ave virge en cui char la chars Dieu fu menbree.

(II Sal 35 *Des salus Nostre Dame*, 491-93)

There is a sense here of how medieval Christianity provides a particularly material illustration of Latour’s understanding of religion. If, for Latour, God is what circulates in the religious mode, here Gautier details how God is manifested and transmitted through Mary’s body as the embodied Christ present on earth.<sup>734</sup> Mary’s body is a space of generation and transformation within which the divine becomes imbricated in the material and the corporeal, where God takes on flesh and bodily form (‘encharnez’, ‘fu menbree’). Mary’s body is the location in which the Logos

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<sup>732</sup> Sylvie Barnay, ‘Une apparition pour protéger: le manteau de la Vierge au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle’, *Cahiers de recherches médiévales*, 8 (2001) <<http://dx.doi.org/10.4000/crm.378>> (paras 2-3 of 17); Rubin, *Mother of God*, p. 132.

<sup>733</sup> Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 308, 359; Rubin, *Mother of God*, p. 243.

<sup>734</sup> Latour, *Inquiry*, p. 315. Latour discusses Mary’s role in the Incarnation in “‘Thou Shalt Not Take the Lord’s Name in Vain’”, p. 233.

becomes material, thereby asserting the capacity of matter to be grasped in the religious mode, for beings of religion to be material and vice versa.<sup>735</sup>

The repetition in this passage of ‘char’ drives home how Christ’s human flesh is predicated on its containment within that of Mary. The bodies of both Mary and Christ are always already networked, always associated with each other. The particular spatial character of this network – an association forged through the containment of one networked entity within the enclosing body of another – is exploited by Gautier through a variety of architectural metaphors that depict Mary’s maternal body as an enclosure for Christ. Mary is Christ’s ‘cambre et cele’ (I Prologue 1, 100); ‘son habitacle’ (*Theophilus*, 1144); his ‘Sale et palais’ (I Mir 42 *D’un moigne qui fu ou fleuve*, 542).<sup>736</sup> Moreover, Mary is a container that resembles a vessel for relics: ‘en ses dous flans glorieus | Porta le tresor precieus’ (II Mir 24 *De Gondree, comment Nostre Dame li rendi son nez*, 487-88). The characterisation of Christ as ‘tresor’ constructs the relationship between mother and child as one between a reliquary and its sacred bodily contents.<sup>737</sup> Gautier explicitly makes the comparison between Mary’s body and a relic container: she is the ‘saint secreire’, the holy reliquary or sanctuary that holds an embodied God (II Prologue 1, 22; *Fleuve*, 542).<sup>738</sup>

This description of Mary as a reliquary container is reinforced by the *Miracles*’ exploration of potential material resonances between Mary and reliquaries. I explored in Chapter One the ways in which imagery of gold and jewels associates sacred bodies’ purity and *virtus* with the material qualities of the reliquaries that enclose them.<sup>739</sup> Although Gautier does not describe the visual appearance of the reliquaries he discusses, he does note their material composition: reliquaries are constructed of gold and silver (‘d’or et d’argent’ (*Tholette*, 185)) and studded with

<sup>735</sup> Latour resists the term ‘material world’, characterising it as a modern concept that amalgamates the two modes of reproduction and reference, *Inquiry*, p. 98.

<sup>736</sup> These depictions of the female body as an enclosure resonate with the construction of Audrey’s virginal body as threatened enclosure explored in Chapter Two, pp. 129-58, and contrast with conceptions of Becket’s mother’s body as leaking, expansive space, Chapter Three, pp. 232-36. They are particularly typical of literary depictions of Mary from the twelfth century, Whitehead, p. 93.

<sup>737</sup> On depictions of Mary as enshrining structure, see Chaganti, pp. 83-84.

<sup>738</sup> Gautier uses the term ‘secreire’ throughout the *Miracles* to describe a space containing relics, whether a smaller reliquary or a larger church sanctuary. See Olivier Collet, *Glossaire et index critiques des œuvres d’attribution certaine de Gautier de Coinci* (Geneva: Droz, 2000), p. 436.

<sup>739</sup> See Chapter One, pp. 92-93.

‘Riches saphirs et riche jame’ (*Tholette*, 1780).<sup>740</sup> These descriptions define reliquaries principally by reference to their materiality, rather than to their visual aspects, while emphasising the composite nature of their make-up: reliquaries are networks of metals and jewels as well as sacred objects, they are collections of entities with their own agencies and trajectories.<sup>741</sup> Reliquaries share this materiality symbolically – and physically – with Mary. Gautier taps into the rich seam of imagery aligning saints with precious stones and metals: Mary is a ‘gemme’, an ‘esmeraude’ (I Prologue 1, 84), an ‘escharboele’ (II Prologue 1, 15). Her holy perfection surpasses the precious earthly materials to which she is compared, as she is more pure than processed gold: ‘affinee | Est plus n’est en fournaise ors finz’ (*Doutance*, 2624-25). While gold cannot compare to Mary, its material purity and refinement render it a useful way of comprehending her perfection. Mary’s superiority to earthly materials draws attention to her physical form as well as her spiritual qualities. When Mary appears to a supplicant in a vision, her blond hair is described as shining brighter than gold (I Mir 31 *Dou soucretain que Nostre Dame visita*, 91-92), suggesting a corporeal resonance between saint and precious metal beyond gold’s symbolic properties. Gautier’s metaphors speak a truth about Mary’s nature that goes beyond conceptions of an ‘objective’ observable reality: articulating Mary as gold, jewels, or a reliquary generates the truth of her body.<sup>742</sup> Like Mary’s wood or stone *ymages*, Gautier’s textual images do not impose meaning on a material reality from which they are separate, but are entangled with and constitutive of the world. That is, Gautier’s metaphors are less a linguistic representation of Mary, than one articulation among many of her presence.

These conventional motifs of saintly resemblance to the reliquary’s materials are granted particular potency by the nature of Mary’s body as container for the divine. Articulating Mary as a reliquary evokes not only her sacred materiality, but also plays on her spatial attributes as an enclosure for another sacred body. In Chapter Two I discussed how metaphors of enclosure depict the female body as inaccessible; in contrast to this tendency, the figure of the reliquary here suggests

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<sup>740</sup> As noted in Chapter One, these materials evoke the heavenly Jerusalem (Revelations 21. 18).

<sup>741</sup> Hahn, *Strange Beauty*, p. 43.

<sup>742</sup> Latour, *Inquiry*, pp. 256-57.

Mary's body is something that transmits and makes the divine accessible.<sup>743</sup> Reliquaries' function is not only to contain the sacred, but also to communicate their holy contents to the faithful.<sup>744</sup> Moreover, reliquaries often take on something of their contents' sacredness, becoming contact relics in their own right: container and contained intermingle in a mutual transfer of qualities shared between entities in the reliquary network.<sup>745</sup> Similarly, the *Miracles* explore how Mary absorbs sanctity from her body's containment of that of the Christ child. Praying to Mary for intercession, a sick clerk fragments her body by focusing in turn on the organs that have touched Christ:

Li sainz ventres soit beneïs  
 Qui te porta, rois Jhesu Criz  
 Et beneoites les mameles  
 Qui t'alaitierent si sont eles.

(I Mir 17 *D'un clerc grief malade que Nostre Dame sana*, 25-28)

Mary's body, composed of a network of body parts that carried and nourished God, is worthy of blessing because of its erstwhile contact with Christ. The sanctification of Mary's body is a reminder of both medieval Christianity's ontological hierarchies (sanctity springs from God) and the accessibility fostered within its hierarchical networks. Mary institutes and allows access to a network linking the worshipper to Christ through her tactile, containing, composite body. Just as Leocadia's body makes present not only the saint herself, but also Mary's sanctity and bodily qualities, so too Mary's body allows access not only to her own saintly presence, but also to Christ's divine agency and body. Christ continues to be a component of Mary's bodily network even when the moment of childbearing and breastfeeding has passed – there is an enduring transformation of both the bodies of container and contained. The *Miracles'* repeated references to Mary as reliquary container for Christ emphasise her as transmitter of divine agencies as well as something to be transmitted.

The ways in which the *Miracles'* articulation of Mary as reliquary works to actualise and make accessible sacred agencies comes to the fore in a cluster of

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<sup>743</sup> Thus these metaphors of enclosure complement, rather than stand in opposition to, the metaphors of flow and channelling discussed above.

<sup>744</sup> Hahn, *Strange Beauty*, p. 9.

<sup>745</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

miracles devoted to the Marian reliquary chasse of Laon Cathedral. These four texts (II Mir 14-17) explore how the particularities of the reliquary – its form and materials, its engagement with questions of creation and craft – inflect its expression of Mary's sanctity and materiality. The texts narrate miracles performed by the reliquary casket on its 1113 tour of northern France and southern England, a journey that was undertaken to raise funds for Laon Cathedral's reconstruction after a civil insurrection in 1112.<sup>746</sup> A substantial Latin collection of miracles attributed to the reliquary was produced 1140-46 by Hérیمان de Tournai at the request of the Bishop of Laon.<sup>747</sup> Hérیمان's text is an example of a local Marian miracle collection, as the text commemorates and responds to a clear set of institutional concerns, tracing the extended topographical network of miracle locations, participants, and financial donations that collectively construct Laon's new cathedral.<sup>748</sup>

The four miracles that Gautier selects from Hérیمان's collection demonstrate the range of functions Marian intercession performs throughout the *Miracles*,

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<sup>746</sup> This is the Laon chasse's second relic tour, following its journey around central France the preceding year (1112), Pierre-André Sigal, 'Les Voyages de reliques aux onzième et douzième siècles', in *Voyage, quête, pèlerinage dans la littérature et la civilisation médiévales: actes du colloque organisé par le CUER-MA les 5, 6, 7 mars 1976* (Aix-en-Provence: Presses universitaires de Provence, 1976), pp. 73-104 (p. 78). Relic tours, the procession of sacred objects at a distance from their home institution, were a relatively common means of raising money and the saint's profile in northern France in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The Laon tour stands out for the distance covered, travelling beyond the local region into England, *ibid.*, pp. 75-76, 80. On the Laon insurrection and destruction, see Simon Yarrow, *Saints and their Communities: Miracles Stories in Twelfth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), pp. 69-70.

<sup>747</sup> Hérیمان's collection is edited as *De miraculis s. Mariae Laudunensis, Patrologia Latina*, 156 (1853), cols 961-1018. The collection opens with a letter from Hérیمان, identified as abbot of the abbey of Saint-Martin in Tournai (1127-37), to Barthélemy de Jur, Bishop of Laon (1113-51), cols 961-64. On Hérیمان's identity and dating the collection, see Alain Saint-Denis, 'Édition des sources d'histoire médiévale: *Les miracles de sainte Marie de Laon* d'Hérیمان de Tournai', *Bulletin du centre d'études médiévales d'Auxerre*, 13 (2009) <<http://dx.doi.org/10.4000/cem.11241>> (paras 27-37, 43 of 50). Some decades before Hérیمان, Guibert de Nogent gives a more disapproving account of the relic tour in *De pignoribus sanctorum*, pp. 79-175. Hérیمان's *De miraculis* is preserved in seven manuscripts: Laon, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 166 bis (thirteenth century, owned by the cathedral chapter of Notre-Dame of Laon); Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS latin 2333A (thirteenth-fourteenth century); Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS latin 2873 (twelfth century, owned by the Carmelites of Place Maubert); Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS latin 12593 (thirteenth century, owned by Corbie Abbey); Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS latin 17491 (1250-1275); Soissons, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 14 (1150-1300, owned by Prémontré Abbey). See Saint-Denis, 'Édition des sources d'histoire médiévale', paras 3-5 of 50.

<sup>748</sup> Yarrow, pp. 87-88.

describing miracles of healing, protection, and punishment.<sup>749</sup> II Mir 14 *Comment li horsfevres fu renluminez* narrates the cure of a blind goldsmith. II Mir 15 *Des marcheans qui offrirent a Nostre Dame deniers et puis li tolrent* recounts how Mary saves the ship carrying her reliquary from pirates in the English channel, along with her subsequent punishment of merchants who fail to honour their promised donations to the chase. II Mir 16 *Comment la fiertre fu botee hors de l'eglyse* describes how the avaricious dean of Christchurch in Devon refuses the chase entry to his church fearing it will siphon donations away from his own institution. II Mir 17 *Comment li moustiers et toute la vile fu ars par un dragon* recounts the subsequent retributive destruction of the town by a dragon. Although most of Gautier's miracles end with a punning reflection and his own interpretation, all but the last of these four miracles lack this trademark conclusion, emphasising that they function as a unit within the larger body of the *Miracles*.<sup>750</sup>

The *Miracles*' depiction of the chase underscores the complexity of the sacred networks in which Mary circulates. It showcases how a reliquary as sacred artefact is always a composite of various material entities with their own trajectories. Gautier refers to the reliquary as a 'fiertre' (*Horsfevre*, 17), a generic term for portable reliquaries, that here envelops multiple sacred artefacts within it: smaller reliquary containers ('filatere' (*Horsfevre*, 7)) as well as copious relics ('corsainz i mist assez' (*Horsfevre*, 39)).<sup>751</sup> The Laon *fiertre* is a collection of entities assimilated into an overarching unit that nevertheless continues to signify as multiple. The named contents include the fragmented heads of saints 'Waleri' and 'Montan' (*Horsfevre*, 37-38), and a smaller phylactery enshrining a strand of Mary's hair (*Marcheans*, 72-73).<sup>752</sup> Both the fragmented body parts of other saints and Mary's

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<sup>749</sup> *Horsfevres* corresponds to II. 2, 'De aurifice caeco illuminato Atrebatii', col. 975 of Heriman's *De miraculis*; *Marcheans* to II. 4, 'De liberatione clericorum Sanctae Mariae in mari a piratis' and II. 5 'De vindicta super negociatores facta apud Dobras', cols 975-77; *Fiertre* to II. 10, 'De puella infirma curate apud Christikercam', cols 979-81; and *Moustiers* to II. 11, 'De incredibili vindicta Dei ibidem facta', cols 981-82.

<sup>750</sup> Hunt, *Miraculous Rhymes*, pp. 45-47.

<sup>751</sup> Reliquaries containing relics of multiple saints were commonplace, see Remensnyder, 'Legendary Treasure at Conques', p. 890.

<sup>752</sup> Hériman's Latin gives more details about the reliquary's contents. He writes that the phylactery bears an inscription explaining that in addition to Mary's hair it contains parts of the Passion sponge, Holy Cross, Christ's shroud, and *sudarium*: 'Spongia, crux domini, cum sindone, cum faciali | Me sacrat, atque tui Genitrix et virgo capilli' (The sponge, the cross of the Lord, with his shroud and face cloth | consecrate me, as well as your hair, Mother and virgin (II. 1, col. 973)). In Hériman's formulation, not preserved by Gautier, the phylactery

hair draw attention to the nature of the human body as a network of constituent parts rather than a discrete unit.<sup>753</sup> In particular, the survival of Mary's hair on earth after her assumption raises the question of how far this physical attribute can be considered part of her body. It is of her body, but not so integral as to have ascended to heaven with her flesh and bones.<sup>754</sup> The hair troubles narratives of Mary's absence from earth, suggesting ways in which entities associated with her can be detached and circulated independently in new assemblages like that constituted by the *fier tre*. The *fier tre* associates Mary's quasi-bodily relics with the fragmented body parts of other saints, acting as a networked artefact that makes present a saintly community through their bodily remains.<sup>755</sup> The *fier tre* is not only a concrete collection of various materials – gold, bones, multiple containers – but also a demonstration of how this conglomeration of mediating objects and bodies brings Mary into being by passing through multiple discontinuities between entities. Moreover, its component parts are enveloped, absorbed, enlisted into the superstructure of Mary's reliquary, transforming them into tangible expressions that make Mary's being materially present.

The Laon casket reiterates in physical form the sustained identification of Mary as reliquary that Gautier explores through metaphor throughout the *Miracles*.<sup>756</sup> The complex reliquary assemblage becomes inseparable from Mary: Gautier addresses it directly as 'ma dame sainte Marie' (*Fier tre*, 176). Gautier writes that while on tour the *fier tre* is celebrated to such an extent:

Qu'il sambloit bien mainte foïe  
Que dou ciel i fust Nostre Dame  
Descendue en cors et en ame.  
(*Moustiers*, 190-92)

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replicates the living containment of something of Christ within an enclosure associated with Mary. While Hérیمان gives no information about how Mary's hair came to Laon, Ward suggests that it may have travelled there through the crusader Ilger Bigod who claimed to have discovered a packet containing Mary's hair in the Holy Sepulchre, and distributed them among several French monasteries after the First Crusade, pp. 137-38.

<sup>753</sup> Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, p. 112.

<sup>754</sup> See medieval debates about how it is possible to have relics of Christ's blood when Christ's resurrected body has ascended to heaven, Vincent, pp. 81, 117.

<sup>755</sup> This echoes discussion of Eloi's reliquaries in Chapter One, pp. 82-88.

<sup>756</sup> In Latour's terms, this physical articulation is no more or less 'real' than the linguistic articulation of Mary as reliquary, *Inquiry*, p. 144.



The reliquary manifests Mary's heavenly body and soul through the emotional response it provokes. Unusually for the *Miracles*, here Gautier notes the location of Mary's body and soul united in heaven (191), gesturing towards the earthly absence of Mary's corpse. Nevertheless, Mary is not presented as a remote body held at a distance that the faithful must overcome. Rather, the reliquary makes both Mary's body and soul present on earth, allowing the faithful an encounter with the saint in which her presence is experienced in bodily form. Mary's body is not absent, but transformed and renewed through the reliquary that communicates it and makes it manifest.

Elsewhere, the reliquary establishes contact with Mary not only by conjuring her bodily form, but also through a more complex process of quasi-embodiment, in which the reliquary as nonhuman artefact materialises Mary's presence in its own right, materially invoking her body while not visually representing her in any straightforward way. The multi-panel narrative illustrations that open each miracle in *L*, the manuscript discussed at the opening of this chapter, present the reliquary as an architectural chasse-like structure (Figure 41).<sup>757</sup> The reliquary is depicted with windows, a sloped roof, and twin spires that clearly mirror the structure of the church building depicted in the upper left panel, as well as potentially the two towers on the western façade of Laon Cathedral itself (Figure 42).<sup>758</sup> This depiction resonates not only with general comparisons of Mary and the figure of Ecclesia, but also with the architectural metaphors for Mary discussed above.<sup>759</sup> The illustration of Mary's reliquary showcases the ways in which artefacts in her sacred network generate Mary's physical presence through a web of shared material, formal, and symbolic

<sup>757</sup> *L*'s images are based on those of *R*, which have been published in I. P. Mokretsova and V. L. Romanova, *Les Manuscrits enluminés français du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle dans les collections soviétiques 1270-1300* (Moscow: Iskousstvo, 1984), pp. 102-47. For discussion of *L*'s illustrations, see Christine Lapostolle, 'Images et apparitions, illustrations des *Miracles de Nostre Dame*', *Médiévales*, 2 (1982), 47-67.

<sup>758</sup> Stones locates *L*'s production in the region of Soissons, Laon, or Noyon in the late thirteenth century, 'Appendix IV', p. 374. Laon Cathedral's west façade was completed c. 1205, so it is possible the illuminator was familiar with its appearance, see Richard Pestell, 'The Design Sources for the Cathedrals of Chartres and Soissons', *Art History*, 4 (1981), 1-13 (p. 12, n. 9). On architectural resonances between reliquaries and buildings in the *Miracles*' manuscripts more generally, see Anna Russakoff, 'Collaborative Illumination: Jean Pucelle and the Visual Program of Gautier de Coinci's *Les Miracles de Nostre Dame* (Paris, BNF, MS. nouv. acq. fr. 24541)', in *Jean Pucelle: Innovation and Collaboration in Manuscript Painting*, ed. by Kyunghye Pyun and Anna Russakoff (London: Harvey Miller, 2013), pp. 65-89 (p. 71).

<sup>759</sup> In which Gautier routinely articulates Mary as enclosing chamber, cell, and hall (I Prologue 1, 100; *Theophilus*, 1144; *Fleuve*, 542). See Kay, *Courtly Contradictions*, p. 186.

attributes without the need for strict visual resemblance. The metaphor of Mary as architectural enclosure generates an experience of her as an architectural artefact. Here the *Miracles* provide an example that corroborates Latour's assertion that language and works of art make the world rather than representing it.<sup>760</sup> Through a shared material nature and function as container for sacred bodies, the reliquary emerges as a uniquely suitable expression of Mary's body on earth that compensates for her corpse's absence and renders her materially accessible to the faithful.



Figure 41. II Mir 16, *Comment la fiertre fu boutee hors de l'eglyse*, the Laon reliquary expelled from church and healing townspeople, late thirteenth century, gold leaf and ink on parchment, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 22928 (L), fol. 208<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>760</sup> Latour, *Inquiry*, pp. 256-57.



Figure 42. Laon Cathedral, western façade, c. 1195-1205, limestone, Laon.

The importance of producing Mary as physical presence, expressed through entities that offer contact with something of her materiality to the faithful, is emphasised throughout the Laon cycle by a focus on mediated forms of tactile access to the reliquary as a route to miraculous intercession. The importance of physical access to the reliquary is brought out by the first miracle, *Horsfevres*, which exemplifies the complex web of interactions the reliquary weaves between sacred and nonsacred bodies and objects. When the Laon reliquary passes through Arras, a blind goldsmith prays to Mary for the return of his sight, and bathes his eyes in water that has washed the ‘saintuaires’, after which Mary immediately restores his vision (30-46). Here Mary’s healing intercession is secured through a mediated contact that passes through a series of entities – her reliquary, the relics it contains, the water that washes them, the words of the supplicant’s prayers. The agency that performs the miracle is distributed through this network of entities; the proliferation of mediating elements in this network enhances rather than diminishes Mary’s sacred effectiveness and these artefacts’ capacity to manifest her presence. After his cure, the artisan kisses the *fierdre* in thanksgiving (‘Cent fois baisa la fierdre’ (51)), suggesting the reliquary shares responsibility for performing the miracle. The

illustration accompanying this miracle in *L* further highlights the importance of bodily contact between supplicant and sacred object (Figure 43). The image does not depict the artisan's prayer or the washing of his eyes, condensing the moment of supplication into a single panel (the lower left) in which he kisses a smaller phylactery. Here the kiss participates in the production rather than the aftermath of the cure, reinforcing the reliquary's role as agent of intercession and physical contact as the catalyst for such intervention. *Horsfevre* emphasises that, if the reliquary manifests Mary's presence through its materiality, this presence and the miraculous agency it is bound up with are made accessible to the faithful through networks of physical contact, touch mediated through multiple displacements.



Figure 43. II Mir 14 *Comment li horsfevres fu renluminez*, the Laon reliquary healing the blind artisan, late thirteenth century, gold leaf and ink on parchment, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 22928 (*L*), fol. 207<sup>r</sup>.

The networks of displaced contact in which the reliquary participates are complicated by Gautier's focus on the human creative efforts that produce the reliquary, a focus that foregrounds the ways these networks incorporate human agency into the communication of Mary's sacred presence. The construction of holy objects and bodies attracts consistent attention throughout the *Miracles*, an attention that *Horsfevre* particularly brings out. This miracle describes how, before he lost his sight, the blind man was a goldsmith who constructed the very reliquary from which he now seeks healing (33-34). Latour's exploration of the relationship between

works of art and those that produce them is helpful here. Latour characterises artists as ‘constituents’, components that allow works of art to ‘proceed towards existence’ rather than creators of their works.<sup>761</sup> In this process, artists are produced by their works of art as well as vice versa.<sup>762</sup> A medieval reliquary such as the Laon *fiertre* does not correspond precisely to Latour’s categorisation of works of art, comprising as it does a range of aesthetic, curative, and devotional functions. Nevertheless, his description of the creative process as a reciprocal one in which both artist and work come into being illuminates the *Miracles*’ depiction of the goldsmith’s labour and the role that human agency plays in the reliquary’s networks of physical contact and sacred healing. *Horsfevre* draws attention to the nature of the casket as not only a manifestation of Mary’s presence but also a laboriously crafted artefact. The goldsmith’s entreaties to restore his vision foreground his role in producing the reliquary that makes Mary present, opening with an account of the *fiertre*’s construction:

Cest fiertre par grant entente  
A Loon fis en ma jovente,  
Au tans le bon vesque Elinant  
(33-35)

This prayer locates the reliquary’s production in the goldsmith’s youth under the rule of Bishop Elinand at the end of the eleventh century (34-35), situating its construction within networks of human temporality and patronage and thereby asserting the manifold human agencies that contribute to the reliquary’s existence.<sup>763</sup> The passage underscores the human labour that produced the reliquary, as the goldsmith cites the ‘grant entente’ with which he worked (33). The goldsmith, his labour, and the commissioning bishop, constitute the reliquary as much as its symbolically rich gold material and architectural encasement. The artisan’s specific identification as a goldsmith (‘Uns orfèvres’ (20)) is a reminder that the reliquary’s gold makes visible not only the powerful symbolic attributes it shares with Mary, but also the more mundane networks of its production history. Rather than undermining

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<sup>761</sup> Latour, *Inquiry*, pp. 160, 240. Latour explores works of art as part of his discussion on beings of fiction.

<sup>762</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 247. Latour makes a similar argument for beings of technology, asserting that the human subject emerges out of the technology crafted as much as vice versa, p. 230.

<sup>763</sup> Alain Saint-Denis, ‘Le Maître Autel de la cathédrale Notre-Dame de Laon vers 1165’, *Bulletin du centre d’études médiévales d’Auxerre*, 4 (2011) <<http://dx.doi.org/10.4000/cem.11841>> (paras 3-4 of 27).

the reliquary's sanctity, this reminder emphasises how artefacts rooted in man-made production can become conduits for the sacred through contact and resemblance with the divine. The Laon reliquary is constituted by and in turn makes networks that incorporate, without privileging, human agency.

If human agency is incorporated into the reliquary's networks through its production, the goldsmith's healing explores how the artefact's production brings the artisan into being in corporeal terms.<sup>764</sup> The reliquary's curative properties draw attention to the ways in which the mutual production of artisan and artefact through craft has a miraculous afterlife that extends beyond the moment of creation. The artisan's prayer to Mary for the restoration of his vision again calls attention to his construction of the *fier tre*:

Douce pucele, respassez  
 [...]
   
 Mes ielz de ceste cecité  
 En tel maniere qu'a grant joie  
 La fier tre que vos fis revoie.  
 (40-44)

The artisan desires miraculous healing so that he can see the reliquary, which is represented as entangled both with the traces of his craft and with the way it forges connections to Mary (44). Mary's miraculous intercessory agency is manifested, transmitted, and accessed not only through the reliquary's materials, but also through the craftsman's work. This focus on the reliquary as constructed by the goldsmith foregrounds his participation in the broad network of entities that articulates Mary's body, presence, and power: through his craft, the goldsmith contributes to the miracle's generation, sharing in the agency of performing the miracle from which he benefits. Mary-as-reliquary is a network composed of and transmitting diverse agencies, from the divine trajectories of Christ and its sacred contents, to those of its material qualities and of the artisan who crafted it. The artisan not only contributes to the miraculous object's production, but is produced by it in a concrete, bodily fashion: through his miraculous healing by the reliquary, the goldsmith's body is re-formed as a healthy site of miracle. As this miracle makes clear, the sacred networks

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<sup>764</sup> See Latour, *Inquiry*, p. 247.

instituted by the reliquary are constituted by and in turn constitute not only Mary's sacred presence and agency, but also the body and agency of her human devotee.

### **Becoming Mary: the *saint soulier***

The participation of ordinary human bodies in the miracle-generating networks that make Mary present is of particular concern for the miracles dedicated to the relic of the *saint soulier* (the Holy Slipper). If Mary's *ymages* and reliquary bring her into being through networks that make her both a vehicle of transmission and that which is transmitted, the miracles that accumulate in the networks around the *soulier* foreground the transformative potential of this transmission.<sup>765</sup> In this latter group of miracles, devotee's bodies take centre stage as sites through which to experience Mary and to access the networks to which she is connected. Moreover, I argue that it is through such sacred networks that these ordinary human bodies are subject to transformations that enable them in turn to manifest Mary's presence.

Networks tracing associations between bodies and objects are particularly important for contact relics like the *soulier*, artefacts that absorb and take on sanctity through contact with saintly bodies.<sup>766</sup> The ways in which the slipper engages with Mary's corporeality in particular – as opposed to the more disembodied materiality that comes to the fore in the Laon miracles – is drawn out in *Doutance*, part of the *Miracles*' closing apparatus. This 2630-line text is structured as an epistle or sermon to Gautier's readers, presenting his book and offering advice about refraining from fleshly excesses in favour of devotion to Mary and eventual heavenly reward.<sup>767</sup> Towards its close, *Doutance* features an extended punning passage reflecting on the slipper's complex relationships to Mary's corporeality:

Beneois soit wi et toz tanz  
Ses sades piez polis et blanz,

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<sup>765</sup> See Latour, *Inquiry*, p. 319 on the transformative quality of the religious mode.

<sup>766</sup> Belting, p. 35; Warner, p. 292.

<sup>767</sup> Importantly *Doutance* forms part of the closing apparatus of the *Miracles* in every stage of its compositional development. In Gautier's first redaction (comprising only Book One) the *Miracles* close with an 830-line version of *Doutance*. In later versions this is expanded to 2630 lines. Passages dedicated to the *soulier* are preserved unchanged in both versions, emphasising this relic's importance in Gautier's collection and depiction of Marian devotion. See Okubo, 'La Formation de la collection des *Miracles* de Gautier de Coinci (première partie)', p. 143.

Ses blanches mains et tuit si membre  
 [...]

Onques ne fu famme formee  
 En toz biens fust si enformee.  
 Bon jour ait wi sa bele forme  
 Et li formiers qui fist la forme  
 Ou cil sollers fu enformés.  
 Et buer fu fais et buer formés  
 Li piez que cele i enforma  
 En cui sainz flanz cil se forma  
 Qui tous nous fait et tous noz forme  
 A sa samblanche et a sa forme.  
 (2393-2412)

Gautier draws attention to Mary's corporeality, blessing her individual limbs, her hands, and her feet, in an enumeration that foregrounds the physicality of a body that is often depicted in nonhuman or mediated forms. The passage's focus on her feet's refined appearance ('Ses sades piez polis et blanz') not only emphasises the holy nature of Mary's corporeal form, but also calls attention to the intimate relationship between the slipper and the body part it clothes. The close proximity of this evocation of Mary's feet to *Doutance's* sustained reflection on the slipper (2331-2412) perpetuates and contributes to a network binding slipper relic and Mary, a network instituted by a contact that renders the slipper sacred and allows it to enduringly manifest access to Mary's body.

Moreover, this passage's repetitive wordplay produces a slippage between Mary's corporeality and other kinds of materiality, reinforcing the ways in which the slipper makes her body accessible. Gautier deploys a dense sequence of wordplay on 'forme', 'former', and 'enformer'.<sup>768</sup> These punning rhymes weave a web of associations between Mary's body (2404), God as creator (2411), Christ as embodied human (2410), the slipper as created object (2406-07), the craftsman who created it (2406), and the ordinary Christian faithful's bodies (2411), which are all bound together by their shared, repeated description in terms of form and formation. Mary's body appears as a constructed body ('Onques ne fu famme formee') that sets

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<sup>768</sup> Potential translations include: 'forme' as form, image, body, mould, last; 'former' as to form, shape, create, express; 'enformer' to teach, inform, constitute, form, *AND*.



her apart from other women. Through the repetition of ‘former’, the text intertwines her created body with the Incarnation, positioning her flesh as the site where God took human form (‘en cui sainz flanz cil se forma’). Mary’s body is both constructed and a space of formation through which Christ’s body is created. The passage also draws attention to the formation of ordinary Christians’ bodies by God (‘Qui [...] tous noz forme’), setting up a series of parallel productions of divine and ordinary bodies that assert their potential resonances. Gautier explicitly notes humanity’s capacity to resemble the divine, formed in God’s image and form (‘A sa samblanche et a sa forme’). Again the repetition of ‘forme’ draws connections between the human bodies made in God’s image and other kinds of bodies within the passage. The couplet ‘Bon jour ait wi sa bele forme | Et li formiers qui fist la forme’ encourages particular conflation of Mary’s body and the shoemaker’s last (‘la forme’) around which her slipper relic was constructed (‘fu enformés’). *Doutance* intertwines the slipper as constructed artefact, the artisanal processes within which the slipper is embedded, and the role of the craftsman (‘li formiers’, the maker of the last) who produced it. Human artisans’ work in crafting objects is conflated with God’s work in creating his mother’s body, as well as those of the faithful, and indeed his own human form. Within Gautier’s dizzying array of puns, the distinctions between types of creation, bodies, and objects break down, not only reinforcing the ways in which human creative production is imbricated in sacred networks, as explored above, but also establishing a material similarity between Mary’s body, her slipper, and other human bodies.

The implications of these complex resonances between the slipper’s noncorporeal materiality, Mary’s divine corporeality, and the faithful’s bodies for access to Mary’s sacred presence and miraculous agency are explored in four texts (II Mir 22-25) translated from a Latin collection of miracles performed by the slipper. These texts were composed after 1143 by Hugues Farsit, a canon of Saint-Jean-des-Vignes in Soissons.<sup>769</sup> The miracles that Gautier selects all recount the

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<sup>769</sup> Hugues Farsit, *Libellus de miraculis b. Mariae Virginis in urbe suessionensi*, *Patrologia Latina*, 179 (1855), cols 1773-1800. On Hugues’s institutional affiliation and date of composition, see cols 1773-76. The *Libellus*’s manuscript transmission is widespread and not fully catalogued. It is preserved alongside Hérیمان’s Laon collection in four thirteenth-century manuscripts: BnF, MS latin 2333A; BnF, MS latin 2873; BnF, MS latin 12593; BnF, MS latin 17491 (see above, n. 747). For further discussion of Hugues’s miracles, see Anne L. Clark, ‘Guardians of the Sacred: The Nuns of Soissons and the Slipper of the Virgin Mary’, *Church History*, 76 (2007), 724-49.

relic's healings of local petitioners, which was housed by the nuns of the abbey of Notre-Dame in Soissons.<sup>770</sup> II Mir 22 *Les miracles Nostre Dame de Soissons* describes a boy cured of ergotism and granted a vision of Mary in heaven. II Mir 23 *Item dou soller* recounts the bodily punishment then cure of a peasant, Buesart, who badmouths the slipper relic. A woman named Gondree whose face has been disfigured is healed in II Mir 24 *De Gondree, comment Nostre Dame li rendi son nez*. Finally II Mir 25 *Comment Nostre Dame rendi un homme le piet*, discussed above, depicts the healing of Robert de Joy's leg.<sup>771</sup> Like the Laon collection, Hugues's miracles respond to local concerns: a spate of healing miracles produced by the slipper during a late 1120s ergotism outbreak, and the reconstruction of the Soissons nunnery church.<sup>772</sup>

The slipper demonstrates the ways in which the diverse entities enlisted in a network are not only connected, but also share qualities and attributes with one another.<sup>773</sup> *Soller*, the miracle of the blasphemous Buesart, demonstrates how the slipper relic takes on the sacred qualities of the saintly body it once touched. Instead of a holy relic, Buesart identifies the slipper as an ordinary old shoe ('D'un viez soller, d'une çavate' (44)). Like the Viking who attacks Audrey's tomb in search of treasure discussed in Chapter Two, Buesart displays a fundamental misunderstanding of the relic's nature, reducing it to an ordinary, isolated object,

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<sup>770</sup> The abbey was a powerful, well-established Benedictine house founded by the Merovingians. See Mayer-Martin, pp. 150, 156. The four miracles name locations (Gonfroicort, Fontenoy, Audignicourt, Joy) within a day's journey both Soissons and Gautier's monastery at Vic-sur-Aisne. There is no record of how the slipper was transmitted to Soissons, Ward, p. 143.

<sup>771</sup> *Soissons* corresponds to Hugues's Chapter 9 'De puero in vision raptō', cols. 1783-84; *Soller* to Chapter 12 'De cujusdam rustici temeritate vindicata', col. 1786; *Gondree* to Chapter 7 'De femina quae nasum recuperavit', cols. 1781-82; and *Piet* to Chapter 31 'De quodam ab aegritudine pedis mirabiliter liberato', cols. 1799-1800.

<sup>772</sup> On the Soissons outbreak and its connection to local building projects, see Clark, 'Guardians of the Sacred', p. 727. Outbreaks of ergotism were common throughout the Middle Ages, and a reputation for healing the disease was attributed to many saints, contributing to the growth of their cults, Henri Tribout de Morembert, 'Les Saints Guerisseurs du mal des ardents', in *Assistance et assisté jusqu'à 1610: actes du 97<sup>e</sup> Congrès national des Sociétés savantes, Nantes, 1972; section de philologie et d'histoire jusqu'à 1610* (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 1979), pp. 429-42. Hugues frames the miracles as an act of Christ to attract donations that will build an appropriate setting for his mother: Christ promises that 'de trans mare et de trans Rhenum pecuniam faceret afferri, de qua domus ejus aedificaretur' (he would cause money to be brought there from across the sea and across the Rhine, with which [Mary's] house might be build (Chapter 9, col. 1784)).

<sup>773</sup> See Bennett, 'Powers of the Hoard', p. 256.

rather than recognising it as part of a larger sacred network.<sup>774</sup> Buesart frames his disbelief in the relic's sanctity as a question of its materiality. He complains that the slipper cannot have belonged to Mary, as it would have rotted a thousand years ago:

Se ce fust sollers Nostre Dame,  
 [...]
 Si nel gardast en fer n'en fust.  
 Que mil anz a porris ne fust.  
 (*Soller*, 61-64)

Buesart judges the slipper's veracity through truth conditions not pertaining to the religious mode, comparing it to the trajectories of ordinary objects rather than sacred ones.<sup>775</sup> Through its relationship to Mary, the slipper takes on the qualities of enduring purity and freedom from decomposition associated with her body (as in the metaphors of incorruptible gold explored above). The slipper's pristine state, its extraordinary temporality, is precisely a means by which to validate the truth of its contact with Mary, rather than a disqualification, as Buesart's subsequent punishment demonstrates (71-91). Contact relics continue to manifest contact with a saintly body, even long after the physical touch between saint and artefact has ended, as the saintly body remains connected within the network that produces the relic.

The complex ways in which the slipper generates contact with Mary are explored in the text and images depicting Robert de Joy's miraculous healing (*Piet*). Robert visits the *soulier*'s Soissons shrine in search of healing for his inflamed, suppurating leg (52-61). Although many pilgrims receive cures from the relic, Robert is not among them (103-09). His wounds exude such a strong odour of decomposition ('De pullentie et de charoingne' (143)) that he is forced to leave Soissons and return home (185-87), where he provokes such disgust that his wife refuses to touch him (343-44).<sup>776</sup> His body is characterised by its proximity to the death and decomposition Mary and her slipper are exempt from, as well as by the way it repulses physical contact.<sup>777</sup> Although Robert does not receive healing at the shrine itself, after his return home he is granted a vision of Mary:

D'une main le chief li soustient

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<sup>774</sup> Chapter Two, p. 149.

<sup>775</sup> See Latour, *Inquiry*, p. 56.

<sup>776</sup> On the social exclusion associated with illness in the *Miracles*, see Beaussart, 'Figures de la maladie', p. 86.

<sup>777</sup> See the discussion of Edward's supplicants, Chapter Two, pp. 178-86.

Et a l'autre le piet li tient.  
 Luez que sa main polie et sade  
 Touchié li a au piet malade,  
 Toz est sanez [...]  
 (367-71)

This apparition heals Robert's diseased flesh through the touch of Mary's hands, locating healing at the point of contact between Robert's sick body and the vision of Mary's refined, perfected body parts ('sa main polie et sade').<sup>778</sup> Miraculous healing is produced through a sequence of relic veneration and visionary apparitions that demonstrate the complexities of notions of Mary's 'body', presenting multiple manifestations of her presence that displace her physical human form in different ways. The parallel between Robert's visit to Mary's contact relic and his encounter with her visionary body is made plain in the illustration that accompanies this miracle in *L* (Figure 44). In the top left panel, Robert kisses the slipper; on the right, Mary visits him and lays her hands on his leg. There is a clear visual narrative here of how touching the contact relic produces, enables, and parallels the touch of Mary's hand. In contrast to the Laon reliquary, which manifests Mary's presence through shared materiality, the *soulier* produces Mary through chains of touch: the slipper is an access point in a network linking the relic to Mary's body, making contact with that body available to the faithful.<sup>779</sup> The slipper is not only a participant in a network binding it to Mary that allows it to transmit something of her presence and body, but importantly generates new networked connections and participants, allowing the faithful access to its sacred network and thus to Mary herself. Robert's direct physical contact with the slipper prepares him for and leads to this dream of contact with Mary's body. Moreover, the depiction of this vision of Mary in the manuscript illumination seems to signal a lack of distinction between Mary's 'real' historical or heavenly body and Robert's experience of it in visionary form. As is common in the *Miracles*' manuscripts, there is no visual distinction between Mary as she appears in visions and in life.<sup>780</sup> Like her *ymages*, visions of Mary produce real contact with her presence, a presence here expressed in corporeal

<sup>778</sup> On the concrete, visual, and bodily nature of Mary's apparitions, see Turner and Turner, p. 155.

<sup>779</sup> Maniura, p. 639.

<sup>780</sup> On the indeterminate nature of the status of Mary's body as it appears in dream visions, see Beaussart, 'Visionnaires et apparitions', pp. 244-45.

form. Mary's presence is distributed through the network that enduringly associates her body and her slipper relic, and Robert's encounter with this network momentarily actualises this presence in tangible form.



Figure 44. II Mir 25 *Comment Nostre Dame rendi un homme le piet*, the healing of Robert de Joy by the slipper relic, late thirteenth century, gold leaf and ink on parchment, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 22928 (L), fol. 233<sup>r</sup>.

Importantly, the *Miracles*' descriptions of healings provoked by Mary's sacred artefacts emphasise how Mary's presence and sanctity might be manifested and transmitted in the bodies of those she heals as well as in sacred artefacts. Charles Freeman notes that, like a saint's preserved body, or Mary's corruption-exempt body, the miraculously healed body plays into fantasies of a perfected body offered to all at the Resurrection.<sup>781</sup> Importantly, it writes this fantasy not onto the already-sacred bodies of saints or the mother of God, but onto the all-too-human bodies of ordinary believers. It evokes the hope that all human bodies contain the potential for sanctity, that the material stuff of the human body, despite its capacity for corruption, is also potentially sacred. Throughout the *Miracles*, Gautier describes Mary's miraculous healing of faithful bodies not simply as a transformation from sickness to health, but as a perfection of the flesh. The flesh of the healed is repeatedly

<sup>781</sup> Freeman, *Holy Bones, Holy Dust*, p. 58.

described as superior to ordinary flesh. The blind goldsmith healed by the Laon reliquary, for example, can see more clearly than he ever could before ('vit plus cler que fait n'ot onques' (*Horsfevre*, 52)). Indeed, this fleshy perfection seems at times to lift the transformed subject out of the realm of humanity: the boy healed of ergotism by Mary's slipper appears like an angel after his healing vision: 'Si bialz, si blans, si clers devint | Qu'il resambla un angelot' (*Soissons*, 204-05). In *Enquête* Latour describes religious beings as engaged in transmitting conversion and transformation rather than information.<sup>782</sup> For Gautier, Mary's agency as intercessor is similarly defined by her capacity to transmit transformations, transformations that are located firmly in the material, enacted on and through the bodies of the faithful. Being healed by Mary perfects human flesh, protecting it from the damages of time, and brings the healed closer to the divine. Proximity to Mary through the miraculous networks of her sacred artefacts transforms the flesh, transmitting something of her heavenly attributes to her supplicants.

Indeed, on several occasions the *Miracles* describes how the bodies of the healed act as relics in their own right, becoming not only participants in Mary's sacred networks, but transformed into articulations of her presence in ways that replicate the nature of contact relics like the slipper. *Gondree* is a striking example of how an encounter with the relic transmits its sanctity onto the worshipper's body. Gondree is stricken with ergotism, leaving her in pain and with facial disfigurements (12-15). An initial visit to the slipper relieves her pain but not her disfiguration (36). Her body's description recalls that of Robert's festering leg; both cases are characterised by a disruption of bodily boundaries that prompts social and sensorial rejection. The flesh is stripped from Gondree's face, exposing her bare teeth and the inside of her throat (26-30).<sup>783</sup> Gondree is rejected by her husband (52-54) and shunned by the townspeople (58-59); her appearance provokes fear and renders her too ugly to look at (21-22). In despair, she prays again to Mary, who grants her healing, restoring her face and allowing her to re-enter society.<sup>784</sup>

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<sup>782</sup> Latour, *Inquiry*, p. 319.

<sup>783</sup> Krause notes that Gautier's rhetoric performs the same bodily exposure and victimisation of Gondree that it describes, 'Gazing on Women in the *Miracles de Nostre Dame*', p. 244.

<sup>784</sup> On miracles as social re-integration, see Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, 'Gautier de Coinci and Medieval Childbirth Miracles', in *Gautier de Coinci*, ed. by Krause and Stones, pp. 197-214 (p. 208); Ménard, p. 434.

Again like that of Robert, this healing takes place in a dream vision after Gondree's initial visit to the slipper. Within her vision, Gondree experiences Mary's touch on her damaged face:

Si com pitiez la point et touche,  
 Se li refait novele bouche  
 Et a ses dois blanz et souez  
 Li fait et forme un si biau nez  
 Et tout le vis si li ra faite  
 Qu'assez plus bele est et mielz faite  
 Qu'onques devant n'avoit esté.

(295-301)

Gondree's untouchable, repulsive body is granted extended tactile contact with Mary. The passage focuses on Mary's manipulation of Gondree's flesh, the way her face is crafted and remade under Mary's touch: Mary's fingers remake Gondree's mouth (296-97), form a new nose (298), and remodel her entire face (299). The *Miracles* presents Gondree's reformed body as Mary's creation, positioning Mary as a sort of healing artisan who recreates her devotees' bodies. Indeed, Gondree's healed face is not only more beautiful than it ever was before, but better made ('mielz faite' (300)). Gondree's body is perfected flesh set apart from ordinary bodies untouched by the divine, transformed by her re-creation at Mary's hands.

The miracle of the goldsmith and the Laon reliquary emphasises how focusing on an artefact's construction draws attention to the networks of production – forged by people, labour, and materials – in which it is embedded. Likewise, this focus on how Mary produces Gondree's healed body highlights the ways in which the woman's body forms part of the extensive networks that attest to Mary's ongoing presence. Indeed, Gondree's body seems to become an extension of Mary. Gondree's restored nose is characterised as Mary's handiwork:

[...] le biau nez Nostre Dame  
 C'a Nostre Dame manouvré.  
 Soutilment a anuit ouvré.

(428-30)

Replicating the language of craft, Gondree's body is constructed by Mary ('manouvré', 'ouvré'). Mary's creation belongs to her ('le biau nez Nostre Dame' (428)), in a way that suggests the healed pilgrim is a living expression of Mary's

presence. Gondree's healed nose is framed as the body part of Mary herself.<sup>785</sup> Just as female virgin saints refract Mary's saintly attributes, Gondree becomes one among many bodies and objects that manifest Mary's presence through the transformative production of the supplicant's body in the miraculous encounter.

Gondree's transformed body is treated as a form of relic by the Soissonnais townspeople, whose fear of her disfigurement is transmuted into a desire to touch her:

Le nes li baisent et la bouche;  
 Mout volentiers chascuns i touche.  
 Chascuns li baise le viaire  
 Ausi com un haut saintuaire.  
 (455-58)

*Gondree* posits miraculous healing as a process of becoming-relic, in which the devotee's transformed body gestures to saintly presence and facilitates contact with this presence, emulating the contact relic itself. The illustration of this miracle in *L* enhances the ways in which Gondree articulates Mary's presence and agency (Figure 45). Its panelled structure stages the similitude between sacred object (the slipper in the first panel), sacred body (Mary's heavenly body in panel three), and potentially sacred human body (Gondree, the female figure in blue at the centre of panel four). The visual parallels established between each moment of sacred contact, placed in the centre of their respective panels, suggest the equivalency not only of touching Mary's slipper and her body, but also of touching Gondree's body as a vehicle of Mary's sanctity. Contact with the divine as this is facilitated by the relic provokes real change in the believer's body, making it more like the relic itself, as miraculous cures enmesh the bodies of faithful, saint, and nonhuman thing into one network. The *Miracles* repeatedly present the miracle encounter with a Marian artefact as means of establishing new networks linking the faithful to Mary, networks through which Mary is transmitted to the diverse entities (sacred objects and faithful bodies) enlisted within that network, transforming these entities into articulations of Mary.

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<sup>785</sup> This characterisation of the healed body as Mary's body is repeated in the following miracle, of Robert de Joy, who similarly implores the townspeople of Soissons to look upon his healed foot as 'la pié la bele dame' (*Piet*, 403).





Figure 45. II Mir 24 *De Gondree, comment Nostre Dame li rendi son nez*, the healing of Gondree by the slipper relic, late thirteenth century, gold leaf and ink on parchment, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 22928 (L), fol. 229<sup>r</sup>.

Gondree is not the only supplicant whose body is transformed into a form of Marian relic in the *Miracles*. The female protagonists of II Mir 9 *De l'empeiris qui garda sa chastee contre mout de temptations* and II Mir 26 *D'une fame qui fu delivree a Loon dou feu* are both described as being treated like 'corsains' by other Christians after undergoing Mary's miraculous intercession.<sup>786</sup> While the *Miracles*

<sup>786</sup> The unnamed woman from Laon at the heart of II Mir 26 *D'une fame qui fu delivree a Loon dou feu* demonstrates the accessibility of Mary's intercession to sinners as well as those who devoutly follow her example. The woman is condemned to burn at the stake for having killed her son-in-law after accusations of an incestuous relationship (112-14). Mary's intercession ensures that the woman's body is unharmed by the flames, and in penance for having attempted to punish someone benefitting from Mary's grace, the local *vidame* worships her like a relic: 'Com un corsaint l'a aouree' (628). On the ways in which Mary makes sanctity accessible to all, including sinners, see Brigitte Cazelles, 'Un héros fatigué: sens et fonction du mot *las* dans les *Miracles* de Gautier de Coinci', *Romance Philology*, 30 (1977), 616-22 (p. 622). The titular chaste empress of II Mir 9 *De l'empeiris qui garda sa chastee contre mout de temptations* is similarly transformed into a *corsaint*: abandoned on a rock in the middle of the sea and resigned to her death, the empress receives a vision of Mary, who gifts her a miraculous healing herb (2223-24). This herb enables the empress to heal any leper who drinks it, and through her healing abilities, the empress becomes a living relic: 'Corsains ert ele et saintuaires' (2793). For the empress's absorption of sanctity, see Nancy B. Black, 'Woman as Savior: The Virgin Mary and the Empress of Rome in Gautier de Coinci's *Miracles*', *Romanic Review*, 88 (1997), 503-17 (p. 503).

are often at pains to distinguish Mary from ordinary women and their excessive corporeality (for example I Prologue 1, 111-14), these transformations suggest that female bodies retain the potential to express and embody something of Mary.<sup>787</sup> A variation on this theme is explored in II Mir 27 *D'une fame qui fu garie a Arras*, which depicts a rather different means of gaining transformative contact with Mary to that experienced by Gondree. This miracle text shares with *Gondree* a focus on the female supplicant's bodily suffering. In this instance, the unnamed woman from Arras described in the miracle is afflicted with ergotism that ravages her breast (249-51), as well as being subjected to extreme sexual violence: despite having made a vow of chastity, the woman is forcibly married to a husband who, after failing to rape her, inflicts a sword wound to her genitals (147-56).<sup>788</sup> She is taken to the church in Arras, which is filled with ergotism sufferers, where she receives a dream of Mary and awakes healed (347-72). Her cure also mirrors many of the terms of Gondree's transformation into a relic. There is again an emphasis on her healed flesh's superior beauty (457-58), and on her newly healed body as crafted by Mary ('La mere Dieu bien i ouvra' (453)). Addressing the woman during her vision, Mary informs her that when she awakes, she will be able to heal others afflicted with ergotism with a kiss:

Qu'a parlé ta bouche a la moye,  
Tuit li ardant que baiseras  
[...]  
Estaint seront dou feu d'enfer  
(390-93)

The Arras woman's body is transformed through her cure into a node in a network that extends Mary's sacred agency and presence beyond the boundaries of her own body. Indeed, like the *soulier* the unnamed woman not only participates in a network that associates her with Mary, but is also able to forge new networks that enlist new participants and transmit Mary's intercessory power to those who come into contact with the miraculously healed body.

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<sup>787</sup> Robert de Joy (*Piet*) is an example of a male body that becomes 'of Mary', but it is not explicitly treated as a relic, see above, n. 785.

<sup>788</sup> Beaussart also notes the woman from Arras as a form of living relic, 'Figures de la maladie', p. 84.

This passage differs from the transformation of Gondree into a contact relic in two important ways. Firstly, rather than becoming the object of the venerating kisses of those who seek healing, the Arras woman is the active distributor of her own healing kisses. While before her cure she was repeatedly subject to unwanted physical contact and violence, her healed body is granted an active agency to kiss and cure at will. This agency enhances her potential resemblance to Mary: while Gondree resembles the contact relic, venerated, kissed, and touched by the faithful, the Arras woman more closely approximates the active healing touch Mary applies to her devotees (for example as in *Piet*, ‘Daigne atouchier nes de son doit’ (27)). Moreover, while Gondree is transformed through displaced physical contact with the slipper relic and Mary’s apparition, *Arras* depicts the procurement of sacred transformation not through physical contact, but through speech. The woman’s mouth is sanctified, becoming a point of contact with Mary that transmits further transformations through the speech that she shared with Mary: ‘Qu’a parlé ta bouche a la moye’. The miracles that cluster around the *soulier* repeatedly draw attention to the bodies of the faithful, as sites not only of networks of contact with Mary’s mediated body but also of transformative cures that renders the healed supplicant’s body a manifestation of Mary’s expansive, transmissible presence and agency. The miracle of the Arras woman likewise suggests that through miraculous contact the faithful body can participate in the network of entities that generate and transmit Mary’s presence. Importantly, this miraculous contact is obtained not through relics, images, or visions, but through language: speaking to Mary becomes a form of contact that sanctifies the speaker’s body.

### **Writing bodies: Gautier’s *Miracles***

The miraculous healing of the Arras woman suggests that words (here the words shared between saint and supplicant) are part of Mary’s sacred networks. Importantly, this miracle also underlines that language is not opposed to but rather entwined with the other nonlinguistic, nonhuman entities – bodies, relics, reliquaries, images – whereby Mary is articulated and made present. In a concrete demonstration of Latour’s assertion that words are not a case apart from other entities, but rather

rank among the manifold ways the world articulates itself, here Mary's sacred intercession is manifested through a combination of speech, human body, and relic.<sup>789</sup>

Language's capacity to generate transformative contact with Mary in ways that are enmeshed with the forms of materiality exhibited by other sacred artefacts is also central to Gautier's composition of the *Miracles*.<sup>790</sup> The entanglement of word and world in the *Miracles* is succinctly demonstrated through Gautier's treatment of Mary's name. The name Maria, he writes, is a sweet word ('si doz moz'), and to speak it is to enter into physical, oral contact with it: 'la langue le touche' (*Sardanei*, 754-55).<sup>791</sup> The word 'Maria' emphasises language's potential physicality, foregrounded as a material entity that the speaker's tongue can touch, blurring distinctions between the sacred contact provided by artefacts and by language.<sup>792</sup> Indeed, throughout the *Miracles*, Gautier presents speaking of Mary as a form of tactile contact with her presence, a contact experienced in the speaker's body in a way that is as real as touching material artefacts. Moreover, the focus on speech suggests that the *Miracles* as a whole can generate the same tactile experience of Mary's presence as her name alone: throughout, Gautier positions the *Miracles* as both a written and an oral experience.<sup>793</sup> In the collection's prologue, Gautier frames his composition as an act of reciting: 'Si miracle sunt tant piteuz, | [...] | Qu'el reciter ai grant delit' (I Prologue 1, 23-26). Not only does Gautier orally perform the miracles he composes ('reciter'), but he also articulates this recitation in the terms of gustatory sweetness associated with Mary's name: her miracles, like her name, are sweet and delicious, 'Tant boen, tant douz, tant deliteuz, | Tant savoreuz et tant eslit'

<sup>789</sup> Latour, *Inquiry*, pp. 145-46. See discussion in Miller, *Speculative Grace*, pp. 99, 102. Here my argument is distinct from that of scholars such as Bernard Cerquiglini, who argues that the miracle is a pure 'acte de langage' that has no existence beyond the rhetorical, 'Les Énonciateurs Gautier', *Médiévales*, 2 (1982), 68-75 (p.71).

<sup>790</sup> Gautier repeatedly states that one of the aims of his work is to provoke emotional and devotional transformations in his readers, to move his audience to greater service of Mary (see for example II Epilogue 33, 1-5).

<sup>791</sup> Jean-Louis Benoit, 'Nourritures terrestres, célestes et poétiques dans les *Miracles de Nostre Dame* de Gautier de Coinci', *Cahiers de recherches médiévales*, 7 (2000) <<http://dx.doi.org/10.4000/crm.900>> (pp. 35, 39).

<sup>792</sup> See Miller, *Speculative Grace*, pp. 109-10.

<sup>793</sup> Gautier frequently employs the sort of formulae common across medieval literature that frame the text as a spoken performance and its audience as listeners: Gautier commands that his audience 'entendez | et vos oreilles me tendez' (*Loon*, 21-22). Duys, has emphasised how the *Miracles*' structure positions it as a single performance undertaken by Gautier, 'Minstrel's Mantle and Monk's Hood', p. 39. On the *Miracles*' orality, see Annette Llinares-Garnier, 'Écrire selon Gauthier de Coinci', *Le Moyen Âge*, 110 (2004), 513-37 (p. 522).

(I Prologue 1, 24-25). Sweetness is one of the typical saintly qualities the *Miracles* repeatedly attributes to Mary (for example ‘Douce pucele’ (*Horsfevre*, 40)). The narratives that Gautier tells about Mary take on Mary’s sweetness, tangibly manifesting and transmitting this sacred attribute to the reader.

The tactile sweetness of words that speak of Mary echoes, at least in part, the imbrication of words, bodies, and the divine established in the monastic reading practices of *lectio divina*.<sup>794</sup> *Lectio divina* envisages contemplative reading as a form of consumption that incorporates knowledge of the divine into readers’ bodies, leading them into closer proximity with God.<sup>795</sup> As I discussed in Chapter Three, consumption foregrounds intimate intercorporeal contact beyond the touch of bodily and material surfaces, an incorporation of the divine into the body in which boundaries between consuming and consumed entities break down: the consumption offered through *lectio divina* is about seeking divine contact through communion.<sup>796</sup> Moreover, while *lectio divina* is rooted in the body, as a form of devotion it is invested precisely in seeking to move beyond bodily readings to access spiritual truth.<sup>797</sup> Gautier’s use of the techniques of *lectio divina* is an important facet of the ways that he asserts the *Miracles*’ ability to produce proximity to the divine.

Yet I also want to suggest that Gautier’s adaptations of conventional ideas of textual contact through *lectio divina* are complemented by a supplementary model of contact that figures access to the divine and in particular to Mary through the relic.

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<sup>794</sup> See Kathryn A. Duys, ‘Performing Vernacular Song in Monastic Culture: The *Lectio Divina* in Gautier de Coinci’s *Miracles de Nostre Dame*’, in *Cultural Performances in Medieval France: Essays in Honor of Nancy Freeman Regalado*, ed. Eglal Doss-Quinby, Roberta L. Krueger and E. Jane Burns (Woodbridge: Brewer, 2007), pp. 123-33; and ‘Reading Royal Allegories in Gautier de Coinci’s *Miracles de Nostre Dame*: The Soissons Manuscript (Paris, BnF Ms. n. a. fr. 24541)’, in *Collections in Context: The Organization of Knowledge and Community in Europe*, ed. by Karen Fresco and Anne D. Hedeman (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2011), pp. 208-36 (pp. 208-09).

<sup>795</sup> On *lectio divina*, see Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, pp. 156-88; Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 2-6; Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture*, trans. by Catharine Misrahi, 3rd edn (New York: Fordham University Press, 1982), pp. 72-73; Duncan Robertson, *Lectio Divina: The Medieval Experience of Reading* (Collegeville: Cistercian Publications, 2011), pp. 31, 88, 102.

<sup>796</sup> Chapter Three, pp. 236-37. Indeed, Gautier’s focus on Mary’s sweetness echoes descriptions of the ultimate reference for the communion of consumption in the Middle Ages, the Eucharist, in which the experience of consuming the body of God is often expressed in terms of ecstatic sweetness. See Bolduc, *The Medieval Poetics of Contraries*, pp. 69-70; on Eucharistic sweetness more broadly, see Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, p. 119.

<sup>797</sup> See for example Robertson, *Lectio Divina*, p. 168.

Gautier repeatedly draws on relics and other sacred artefacts as a model for his text's composition and function. Mary's name is articulated not only as a sweet morsel to be consumed, but as a form of relic:

Mout baise cil haut saintuaire  
 Qui de bon cuer son non atouche  
 Et a ses ielz et a sa bouche.  
 (*Doutance*, 2514-16)

Mary's name is a relic in its own right: speaking and reading it is a form of touch and a way of placing venerating kisses on it. This description aligns reading Mary's name in the *Miracles* with similar acts of tactile devotion described within the text.<sup>798</sup> The *Miracles*' words have a physicality of their own, while sharing in the sacred materiality and tangibility of the artefacts recounted in the text. Here the *Miracles* make plain that the physical contact offered by Mary's relic-name operates through both visual reading and oral recitation, which amount to touching Mary with one's eyes as well as one's mouth ('Et a ses ielz et a sa bouche'). Written text that names Mary, such as the *Miracles*, can therefore function as a relic, joining the multitude of entities that make Mary present and accessible.

In contrast to the model of *lectio divina*, this articulation of text as relic and reading as relic veneration offers a model of contact that dwells on the body's surfaces rather than seeking to transcend bodily readings to access spiritual truth.<sup>799</sup> As with other sacred artefacts within the *Miracles*, this passage emphasises that Mary's relic-name makes her presence at least momentarily tangible, foregrounding the importance of the faithful's bodies as sites where Mary may be experienced. The contact between Mary and the faithful produced by the text engages in the transmission of her transformative intercession in ways that replicate the effects of

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<sup>798</sup> The special emphasis placed by the *Miracles* on vocalising Mary's name to obtain contact and intercession recalls the ways in which the invocation of saintly names can perform the same function as contact with relics in medieval devotional practice. See Martina Bagnoli, 'Dressing the Relics: Some Thoughts on the Custom of Relic Wrapping in Medieval Christianity', in *Matter of Faith*, ed. by Robinson, Beer, and Harnden, pp. 100-09 (p. 106). Reading is assimilated with encounters with relics and reliquaries described within the text, resembling the kisses placed on the slipper, the Laon reliquary, and Gondree's body, as well as those distributed by the Arras woman. On reading the *Miracles* as devotional act more broadly, see Michelle Bolduc, 'Gautier de Coinci and the Translation of Exegesis', *Neophilologus*, 93 (2009), 377-92 (p. 389).

<sup>799</sup> This resonates with Latour's claim that religion is focused on immanence rather than transcendence, see "'Thou Shalt Not Take the Lord's Name in Vain'", p. 219.

Mary's intervention on the bodies of miracle recipients within the text. Those who speak of Mary enter into tactile contact that refreshes and remakes their mouths:

Qui de bon cuer, dame, te touche,

Tu li refais toute la bouche

(II Prologue 1, 255-56)

The language here resonates with the terms in which Gautier describes Mary's reconstruction of Gondree's face and mouth ('Se li refait novele bouche' (*Gondree*, 296)), identifying the transformation of those who speak of Mary with that of the supplicant miraculously healed by a contact relic. The words of the *Miracles* not only share in the materiality of Mary's relics, but also do the same work as these artefacts, generating and transmitting Mary's sacred presence and transformative agency to those who encounter them.<sup>800</sup> As Latour suggests, it does not matter if the beings of religion are 'only words', as these words are engaged in the work of producing persons in the world, transforming, converting, and saving those who encounter them.<sup>801</sup> Gautier's text holds out the possibility to his readers that, through speaking of Mary, through reading the words of her miracles, they too may undergo not only spiritual conversion, but a miraculous transformation focused on the body.

Gautier's assertion of his text as a form of relic offering sacred contact and transmitting transformations is underscored by the treatment of a number of the *Miracles*' manuscripts, which show signs of tactile, interactive responses from later readers. Across the *Miracles*' extensive corpus, these responses take a variety of forms, from the excision of images (as in *N*, discussed above); to the use of a whole book as a protective talisman; to the scratching, touching, and kissing of illustrations.<sup>802</sup> The large, single-panel historiated initials that open each text in Paris,

<sup>800</sup> On hagiographic text as contact relic, see Wogan-Browne, 'The Apple's Message', p. 43.

<sup>801</sup> Latour, *Inquiry*, p. 308.

<sup>802</sup> In a later manuscript, the *Miracles*' actualisation of Mary's presence and agency seems to extend to the book as a unit. *S*, produced 1328-34 by Jean Pucelle's Parisian workshop for Jeanne de Bourgogne (1293-1349), wife of Philippe VI of France, was taken to war by Jeanne's son, Jean II, and lost to the English at Poitiers in 1356. Nancy Black suggests that the elaborately illuminated book, transmitting Gautier's devotional text and laden with images of Christ, Mary, and other saints, was taken to war as a talismanic prospective agent of miracles enlivened by its sacred contents to act like the sacred artefacts it depicts. Again, the book appears as a form of contact relic. See 'An Analysis and Transcription of the Latin Glosses Accompanying Gautier de Coinci's Miracle of "The Empress of Rome"', *Text*, 14 (2002), 91-108 (p. 94); 'Images of The Virgin Mary in the Soissons Manuscript (Paris, BNF, Nouv. Acq. Fr. 24541)', in *Gautier de Coinci*, ed. by Krause and Stones, pp. 253-77 (p. 255-56, 260, 275).

Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 1533 (*H*), a thirteenth-century French manuscript later owned by Agnes of Burgundy (1407-1476), exemplify the diverse sorts of wear inflicted on illustrations, encompassing damage to both demonic and saintly targets (Figure 46).<sup>803</sup> In particular, illustrations of Mary's body and of her icons have been worn away by the touch of readers (Figures 47-48). These responses seem to correspond to the patterns I have explored in previous chapters: the manuscript images are worn down by touch in a way that points to devotional contemplation or a more active pursuit of miraculous intercession.<sup>804</sup> These worn illuminations suggest a readership that desired to supplement the textual contact with Mary described by Gautier with an even more physical press of skin to page that mirrors the treatment of relics and reliquaries within the text. Not only the words of the text, but also the book as composite whole acts as a form of sacred artefact. This treatment is encouraged by Gautier's text, which reflects on the ways the book as material object might share Mary's sacrality. In his closing prayer, Gautier envisages Mary's name as transmitting sacred value to the pages of the book on which it is written:

Ave. Quant ton doz non escrit voi par ces livres,  
[...]  
La page ou est escrit plus en est bele et chiere.  
(*Salus*, 118-20)

Writing Mary's name in his book makes its pages more beautiful and worthy, transforming the physical object as the healed faithful's flesh is perfected by contact with Mary's relics. The *Miracles*' text thus sanctifies its material supports. Mary's name transmits her sacred nature to the page, a transmission that in turn allows the page to further express and transmit Mary.<sup>805</sup> There is a sense here of the expansive, communicable quality of Mary's sanctity: something of Mary (her presence, her

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<sup>803</sup> Like the Cambridge manuscript of Matthew Paris's life of Edward the Confessor discussed in Chapter Two, pp. 169-76, *H* accommodates a range of apparent motivations for erasure. In addition to touch targeted at holy images, the manuscript also displays the deliberate destruction of images of demons (see for example fol. 89<sup>v</sup>), as undesirable images are destroyed by the touch. On the destruction of demons in other medieval manuscripts, see Borland, p. 102.

<sup>804</sup> See Rudy, 'Dirty Books', para. 1 of 64; 'Kissing Images', pp. 21, 26, 30. For Mary's particular association with textual amulets for use during childbirth, see L'Estrange, p. 56. As in earlier discussions of interaction with manuscripts in Chapters One and Two, comments about why the readers of Gautier's manuscripts interacted with these images in this way are necessarily speculative.

<sup>805</sup> On the invocation of Mary in textual amulets more broadly, see Skemer, p. 236.



intercessory power, her intangible attributes) is conveyed through a proliferating cascade of mediators, from her name to the page to the reader.<sup>806</sup> Each mediator in this network of entities is transformed, rendered more sacred, beautiful, or effective, through this act of transmission, which also re-articulates Mary as present in the world. The *Miracles* as text and book are established by Gautier and treated by his readers as another of the multitude of entities that actualise Mary, entities that render her tangibly present to the touch of the faithful and that potentially produce further manifestations of Mary's presence and power.



Figure 46. I Mir 24 *Dou moigne que Nostre Dame resuscita*, image of demon scratched out by reader, c. 1280, gold leaf and ink on parchment, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 1533 (H), fol. 89<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>806</sup> Latour characterises networks of association ([NET]) as potentially infinitely extendible, as new associations between entities can always be discovered, enlisting new participants and indeed intersecting with other networks in which its components are embedded. Latour, *Inquiry*, p. 41.



Figure 47. I Mir 17 *D'un cler gief malade que Nostre Dame sana*, the healing of a monk through a vision of Mary, c. 1280, gold leaf and ink on parchment, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 1533 (H), fol. 73<sup>r</sup>.



Figure 48. II Mir 32 *Le miracle qui desfendi les samedis Nostre Dame*, Mary's image revealed to the congregation, c. 1280, gold leaf and ink on parchment, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 1533 (H), fol. 236<sup>r</sup>.

If the audience's bodies are transformed through their encounter with the *Miracles*, so too is that of its author. Gautier describes how his body is transformed through composition, borrowing the lexis of crafting that recurs throughout the collection.<sup>807</sup> He describes Mary as a purifying file, 'la lime | Qui tout escure et tout eslime' (I Prologue 1, 325-26), and entreats her to file down his tongue so that he may effectively compose her miracles:

[...] eslimer  
 Por ses myracles biau rimer,  
 La langue Gautier de Coinsi  
 (I Prologue 1, 327-29)<sup>808</sup>

Here Mary is both artisan and crafting tool, anticipating her characterisation as a sacred artisan who crafts and reshapes her devotees' bodies.<sup>809</sup> The transformation of Gautier's body – specifically his tongue as locus of composition – aligns Gautier with the other transformed bodies he evokes, those of his readers and those within the text, underscoring his authorship as a participatory act of Marian devotion. As in the remaking of the mouths of those who recite the *Miracles*, here the text not only generates experiences of Mary's presence, but also produces the bodies of both author and audience as appropriate entities with which to encounter and communicate her. If the *Miracles* repeatedly bring Mary into being through her reiterated articulation as image, relic, reliquary, and so on, they also work to produce both Gautier and their audience as suitable recipients of the sacred, suitable participants in the networks that articulate and transmit Mary.<sup>810</sup>

Mary's crafting of Gautier's tongue is concerned not only with Gautier's body, but also with the *Miracles* itself as a poetic composition. The couplet 'eslimer'-'rimer' (327-28) reinforces a connection between Mary's reshaping of

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<sup>807</sup> As in the healing of the blind goldsmith in *Horsfevre*, this resonates in part but not wholly with models of reciprocal production of works of art ascribed by Latour to beings of fiction, *Inquiry*, p. 240.

<sup>808</sup> This is perhaps also a reference to the chiselling of tongues performed by the personified Grammatica in medieval depictions of the seven liberal arts, see Georgiana Donavin, *Scribit Mater: Mary and the Language Arts in the Literature of Medieval England* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2012), p. 92.

<sup>809</sup> As in the miracles of Gondree and the woman from Arras.

<sup>810</sup> Again there is resonance here with Latour's characterisation of the ways in which works of art impose themselves on their audiences. Yet this mode of encounter involves a different set of concerns to Gautier's engagement in spiritual and bodily transformation. See Latour, *Inquiry*, pp. 241-43.

Gautier's authorial body and his composition of vernacular poetry. Gautier's poetics have attracted sustained interest from scholars, who have highlighted the ambiguous status of decorative, poetic language within the *Miracles*. Gautier expresses a disapproval of refined language, depicting it as a false tool of secular poets, and praising plain, unadorned writing.<sup>811</sup> Yet Gautier himself uses many of these strategies of rhetorical ornamentation, which are redeemed through their use in service of Mary, rather than for secular purposes (*Tholete*, 2315-17).<sup>812</sup> Gautier's ambivalence plays into broader medieval thinking about the particular relationship between Mary and poetic language. As the site of the Incarnation, the Word become flesh, Mary was particularly associated with language's generative potential.<sup>813</sup> Moreover, through her body's nature as a suitable container for the Word she redeems the capacity of post-lapsarian language to convey truth, purifying and legitimising the rhetorical ornamentation deployed by Gautier.<sup>814</sup> Beautiful,

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<sup>811</sup> For example, Gautier criticises poets' tendency to 'biau mentir et soutilment', 'dire moz polis et gens' (II Prologue 1, 62, 76), and states instead that 'Vaut milz a dire rudement', 'Par symplement le voir retraire' (*ibid.*, 61, 74). On secular poetry and rhetorical ornamentation's dangerous lack of truthfulness and artificiality of, see Jean-Louis Benoit, 'Vérité et imaginaire dans les miracles de Nostre Dame de Gautier de Coinci et d'Adgar', *Buletinul Universitatii Petrol-Gaze din Ploiești*, 1 (2010), 153-68 (p. 156); Anne Berthelot, 'Anti-miracle et anti-fabliau: la subversion des genres', *Romania*, 106 (1985), 399-419 (pp. 415-18).

<sup>812</sup> There is extensive scholarship on Gautier's use of secular techniques. See for example Margaret Switten, 'Borrowing, Citation, and Authorship in Gautier de Coinci's *Miracles de Nostre Dame*', in *The Medieval Author in Medieval French Literature*, ed. by Virginie Greene (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 29-59 (pp. 32-24). On Gautier's particular engagement with *trouvere* techniques, see Ardis Butterfield, *Poetry and Music in Medieval France from Jean Renart to Guillaume de Machaut* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 104-15; Duys, 'Minstrel's Mantle and Monk's Hood', p. 44.

<sup>813</sup> Donavin, p. 21. Medieval rhetoricians drew on the Incarnation to construct connections between text and divine bodies, Robin Hass Birky, "'The Word Was Made Flesh": Gendered Bodies and Anti-Bodies in Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century Arts of Poetry', in *Medieval Rhetoric: A Casebook*, ed. by Scott D. Troyan (New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 161-215 (p. 161). Birky cites Geoffrey of Vinsauf's *Poetria nova* (c. 1208-13) as an influential example of how the Incarnation allows the divine body of Christ to serve as model for writing: just as Christ is clothed in the human body, so poetic language clothes and gives body to the matter of the poem: 'Materiam verbis veniat vestire poesis', *Poetria nova*, l. 61, edited by Edmond Faral in *Les Arts poétique du XII<sup>e</sup> et du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle: recherches et documents sur la technique littéraire du moyen âge* (Paris: Champion, 1924), pp. 194-262 (p. 199); translated by Ernest Gallo as 'let the art of poetry come to clothe the matter with words', *The 'Poetria nova' and its Sources in Early Rhetorical Doctrine* (The Hague: Mouton, 1971), p. 17. On the influence of the *Poetria nova* on medieval rhetoric, see *Medieval Grammar and Rhetoric: Language Arts and Literary Theory, AD 300-1475*, ed. by Rita Copeland and Ineke Sluiter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 594-96.

<sup>814</sup> Birky writes that this argument is elaborated in particular in a work completed shortly after the *Miracles*, John of Garland's *Parisiana poetria* (c. 1231-35). John positions

ornamental language is appropriate for describing Mary as it reflects its subject matter's sacred worth.<sup>815</sup> Yet in his depiction of Mary filing down his tongue, Gautier asserts that his poetic project's legitimacy rests as much on his own body's refinement as on the sacred nature of Mary as his subject. Gautier's composition of elaborate vernacular poetry is authorised by the transformative physical contact he entreats from Mary.

Gautier's concern for his body as locus of sacred transformation and compositional authority draws attention to an engagement with the interweaving of human bodies and the *Miracles* as poetic project that runs throughout the collection. This interweaving is brought to the fore in three extended passages of *annominatio*, the punning wordplay that closes nearly every miracle in the collection. These passages play on variations of 'menbre', 'demenbrer', and 'remenbrer', evoking notions of bodies, dismemberment, and remembrance. All three texts in which this wordplay is repeated are concerned with relics: Leocadia's corporeal relics (*Tholete*; *Leochade*) and Mary's slipper (*Doutance*). The use of wordplay connected to the body in texts concerned with corporeal and contact relics brings to the fore questions of presence, proximity, and bodies both human and divine. In what follows, I explore how through these repeated puns the text works not only to produce proximity between its readers and Mary, but also to engage these readers' bodies in the continued process of making Mary present on earth, foregrounding the potential of Gautier's faithful readers to manifest and transmit Mary.

The first instance of this punning cluster is deployed at the close of *Tholete* to praise Mary and urge the faithful to remember her:

Loons la tuit, la bien menbree:

Par tout doit estre ramenbree.

Ou ma lange demenberai

Ou je bien la ramenberrai.

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unadorned language as masculine, associated with Adam's pre-lapsarian nakedness; and adorned language as feminine, associated with Eve and a post-lapsarian need for clothing. Marian rhetoric is the only acceptable form of 'feminine' ornamented language; *The Parisiana Poetria of John of Garland*, ed. and trans. by Traugott Lawler (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), pp. 92-93, 168-71, 184-85, 198-99, 206-07. John enacts this sort of rhetorical ornamentation to venerate Mary in the linked work *Epithalamium beate virginis Marie*, ed. and trans. by Antonio Saiani (Florence: Olschki, 1995). For discussion, see Birky, pp. 171-73, 177, 185.

<sup>815</sup> Birky, p. 182; Donavin, p. 100.

Enfers celui desmenberra  
 Qui bien ne la ramenberra.  
 Sovent nos doit li menbrer  
 Quant Diex en li se volt menbrer.  
 Enfers toz tans nos desmenbrast  
 S'en li de nos Dieu ne menbrast.  
 Quant sa douceur de nos menbra,  
 En ses sains membres se menbra.  
 Por ce nos doivent tout li membre  
 Souslever quant de li nos membre.  
 (Tholete, 2343-56)

This passage demonstrates the ways in which Gautier's extended riffs on a particular root ('membre') strip repeated words down to their constituent sounds. He emphasises the repeated words' sensorial qualities, their orality and aurality, as well as the visual patterns they create on the page.<sup>816</sup> This deconstruction and reconstruction of words and sounds performs the mastication of sacred text that Gautier adopts from *lectio divina*. Gautier describes speaking of Mary as a process of sucking, savouring between the teeth: 'Qui bien le suce entre ses dens' (I Prologue 1, 174). His wordplay encourages a similar sense of language that is chewed and broken down into its constituent pieces.<sup>817</sup> Gautier's use of the techniques of *lectio divina* in his wordplay foregrounds the ways in which the text might provide access to the divine. Wordplay in Gautier is associated with narrative closure: nearly every miracle text ends in *annominatio*, and these punning sections are not tied to linear narrative progression.<sup>818</sup> In its encouragement to textual mastication inspired by *lectio divina*, Gautier's wordplay suggests access to a sacred temporality outside narrative that does not draw to a close, in which linear time is suspended in favour of divine contemplation.<sup>819</sup>

In part, these punning passages lead the reader into contact and communion with the divine through a contemplative escape from the world in the manner of

<sup>816</sup> Bolduc, *The Medieval Poetics of Contraries*, p. 84; Robert L. A. Clark, 'Gautier's Wordplay as Devotional Ecstasy', in *Gautier de Coinci*, ed. by Krause and Stones, pp. 113-25 (p. 117).

<sup>817</sup> This deconstruction also recalls the monastic practice of *declinatio*, Orlando Rudder, 'Gautier de Coinci ou l'écriture subreptice', *Médiévales*, 2 (1982), 104-11 (pp. 108-09).

<sup>818</sup> Clark, 'Gautier's Wordplay as Devotional Ecstasy', p. 114.

<sup>819</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 118.

*lectio divina*.<sup>820</sup> At the same time, the repeated deployment of this particular cluster of puns in texts concerned with corporeal and contact relics suggests that wordplay might also be engaged with experiences of sacred presence in the world, rather than contemplative escape from it.<sup>821</sup> The ‘menbre’ wordplay that closes *Tholete* is repeated near the opening of Leocadia’s second miracle to describe the suffering caused to the Devil by Gautier’s remembrance of Mary (*Leochade*, 121-26). The repetition of this wordplay positions *Leochade* as both a continuation and renewal of its predecessor.<sup>822</sup> This wordplay is re-iterated a third time at the close of *Doutance* towards the end of the collection (2393-2402), after a long reflection on Mary’s slipper relic. This repetition reinforces connections between different types of sacred artefacts, emphasising continuities between Leocadia’s incorrupt corpse and fragmentary bones, between Mary’s *ymage* and contact relics, and between the texts that recount all of these entities. The repetition reinforces the sense that these material and textual entities are elements in a wider sacred network, different articulations that continually renew and re-present the sacred, ensuring its continued presence in the world. Paying attention to this particular wordplay leads, that is, to contemplation not of a transcendent divinity that is beyond the world, but to the immanent, multiple, repeated, and endlessly reformulated presence of the sacred in earthly things.

Returning to the passage from *Tholete*, Gautier’s punning repetition forges connections not only between different texts within the collection, but also between divergent concepts within the passage itself, concepts which again focus on sacred presence in the world. *Tholete* demonstrates how a multitude of sonic resonances generates a multitude of disparate meanings, meanings which depend upon connections between memory (‘remenbrer’, ‘menbrer’ (2344, 2346, 2348, 2349, 2353, 2356)) and the members of the body (‘li menbre’, ‘menbrer’ (2343, 2350, 2352, 2354, 2355)), particularly the dismembered body (‘desmenberer’ (2345, 2347,

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<sup>820</sup> On Gautier’s wordplay as contemplative contact with the divine, see *Ibid.*, pp. 118, 121; Daniel E. O’Sullivan, *Marian Devotion in Thirteenth-Century French Lyric* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), p. 11; Marie-Christine Pouchelle, ‘Mots, fluides et vertiges: les fêtes orales de la mystique chez Gautier de Coinci’, *Annales: Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 42.5 (1987), 1209-30 (p. 1224). On *annominatio* in monastic reading, see Duys, ‘Performing Vernacular Song’, p. 128.

<sup>821</sup> See Latour, “‘Thou Shalt Not Take the Lord’s Name in Vain’”, p. 219.

<sup>822</sup> There is also a sense here of how Gautier positions himself as inheritor of Ildefonsus as prestigious recipient of Mary’s miraculous intervention.

2351)).<sup>823</sup> Through wordplay, these multiple meanings are unified into a single salvational message: remembering Mary as the bodily site of the Incarnation is placed in opposition to infernal dismemberment (2349-52). Through the repetition of forms of ‘menbre’ Gautier calls attention to Mary’s body (‘ses sains menbres’ (2354)), while drawing this body into proximity with those of the author (2345) and audience (2355). The repetition of this wordplay centred on a vocabulary of the body in three texts about relics suggests that writing about relics is particularly suited to encouraging contemplation of Mary’s body and its relationships with the reader’s body. In this the *Miracles* do the same work as the slipper relic or Leocadia as Mary’s living *ymage*, leading the reader into forms of mediated contact with Mary, while making Mary present in the world. These three repeated sections suggest continuities between the work being done in relic encounters and that which takes place in reading and remembering Mary. Encountering the text, like encountering relics, promises contact with Mary, her agency, and her presence. Both modes of encounter make Mary present to the faithful through forms of repetition and contact that depend upon mediation rather than treating it as an impediment to proximity.

Through the proximity forged by Gautier’s wordplay, the reader, and specifically the reader’s body, is recruited into the multitude of entities that ensure Mary’s continued existence and transmission. Gautier exploits the double significance of ‘menbrer’ as both bodily formation and remembrance (as in the rhyme pairs 2349-50, 2353-54) to associate the remembering faithful with Mary and Christ’s holy bodies. The formation of Christ’s limbs, as he takes on human flesh within Mary’s womb (‘Diex en li se volt menbrer’ (2350)) is intertwined with the act of remembering undertaken by the faithful Christian (‘Sovent nos doit li menbrer’ (2349)).<sup>824</sup> Remembering the divine is associated with the divine becoming flesh, suggesting this remembrance performs a re-enactment of the Incarnation, by reiterating the presence of the divine on earth. Moreover, *Tholette*’s final line suggests that Mary’s memory is inscribed in the faithful’s bodies, being enacted through the members of the body, as the faithful are entreated to raise all their limbs

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<sup>823</sup> For discussion of how Gautier’s *annominatio* negotiates meaning, see Clark, ‘Gautier’s Wordplay as Devotional Ecstasy’, p. 118; Hunt, *Miraculous Rhymes*, pp. 159-60; Llinares-Garnier, p. 529; Rudder, p. 106.

<sup>824</sup> Indeed, in the variation on this wordplay in the *Doutance*, Gautier specifically suggests that it is Mary’s body that should be remembered: ‘De ses biaux menbres remanbrer’ (*Doutance*, 2397).



in a physical gesture as they remember ('nos doivent tout li menbre | Souslever quant de li nos menbre' (2355-56)).<sup>825</sup> Remembering Mary through reading the *Miracles* is in these passages of wordplay a means to mediated proximity. Mary is brought repeatedly into being through the reader's memory, just as the reader is brought to divine communion and potential salvation through this memory. The reader's remembering body re-articulates Mary (and her incarnational body) as present and accessible, in a manner comparable to the expressions of Mary's presence explored within these texts (Leocadia's relics and the slipper). Gautier thus radically extends the promise of Mary's presence: any reader can make Mary present, through reading the *Miracles*, speaking her name, and remembering her in an embodied way.<sup>826</sup> These punning passages, in their focus on bodies and memory, emphasise that Gautier's *annominatio* is not only aimed at producing a contemplative contact with an absent, heavenly Mary, but is also intended to reveal Mary's presence on earth, in the text, and in the reader.

The ways in which the *Miracles*, as text and book, transmit the sacred and foster the reader's access to Mary's presence are encapsulated in the response of a later reader to the collection's closing prayer cycle preserved in *H*. Here the words of the text have solicited a tactile response: several illuminated initials in the prayer display signs of wear (Figure 49).<sup>827</sup> In general, the text of this prayer cycle primes readers to see both text and book as sacred artefacts incarnating and conveying Mary's presence. Gautier reiterates the relic-like nature of Mary's name ('Qui ton doz non atouche | [...] | Bien puet dire qu'il a baisiet haut saintuaire' (*Salus*, 121-23)). Moreover, *H*'s copy of this prayer foregrounds how the manuscript's composite materiality might enhance the relic-like experience of Mary transmitted through the *Miracles*' text. The text draws attention to the ways that imagery of precious materials such as gold and jewels articulates Mary: 'Ave dame au doz non c'on doit poutraire d'or. | [...] | Ave. Tes non est plains de precieuses pierres.' (125-29). Mary's name is worthy of portrayal in gold and is laden with precious stones, reiterating its qualities as a relic to be enshrined. This evocation of gold and jewels

<sup>825</sup> Failure to remember also has a bodily impact, leading to infernal dismemberment (*Tholete*, 2351).

<sup>826</sup> On medieval conceptions of memory as connected to embodiment, and the ways these ideas engage with the self as a body-soul unit, see Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, pp. 61-62, 69.

<sup>827</sup> On the touch of readers to text as well as manuscript images, see Rudy, 'Dirty Books', para. 50 of 64.

recalls the materials from which reliquaries were made, as well as recalling the association between reliquaries and Mary herself.<sup>828</sup> The gold initials that have drawn the touch of *H*'s reader are figured in the text as appropriate means of inscribing words about Mary, potentially fostering a sense of the desirability and efficacy of contact with the written word to express Mary's presence, materiality, and agency. The golden words sanctify the page, appropriately enshrining Mary's name, while also transmitting something of her sacred nature in their reference to her body's reliquary-like nature. Moreover, this prayer is a form of rosary, each stanza beginning with a repetition of 'Ave', a form that may have been particularly conducive to soliciting the engagement of the reader's body with the words on the page.<sup>829</sup> Reading this prayer becomes an act of devotion in which bodily gesture and tactile contact with a material artefact are intertwined with the text's words. Repeating the 'Ave', the reader enacts the sort of bodily commemoration of Mary that Gautier advocates for in his punning passages on 'menbrer' discussed above. The reader becomes, through the recitation and touch of this prayer, yet another of the entities that maintains and manifests Mary's presence.

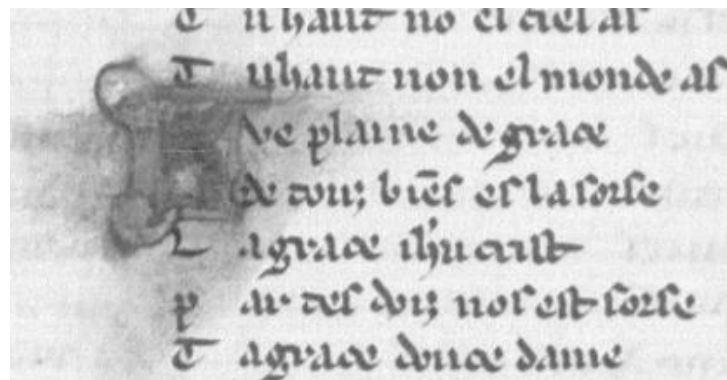


Figure 49. II Sal 35 *Ci commence li prologues des salus Nostre Dame*, wear on illuminated initial, c. 1280, gold leaf and ink on parchment, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 1533 (*H*), fol. 257<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>828</sup> This association, of Mary, reliquary, and by extension, her name, is heightened by the *Salus*' repeated reiteration of Mary as an architectural container for Christ, again reinforcing her association with reliquaries as sacred containers: she is described variously as Christ's 'chambre' (314), 'sacraires', 'temples' (501), 'loge', 'tente' (529), whose body contains the 'tresor' that is God (602).

<sup>829</sup> Duys, 'Performing Vernacular Song', pp. 124-25. On the participatory nature of repeating the 'Ave Maria' salutation, see Laurel Broughton, 'The Rose, the Blessed Virgin Undefined: Incarnational Piety in Gautier's *Miracles de Nostre Dame*', in *Gautier de Coinci*, ed. by Krause and Stones, pp. 282-99 (pp. 283-84, 298).

The *Miracles* thus opens up for the reader a multitude of ways to seek contact with Mary: through touch, sight, speech, contemplation, memory, and prayer. The traces of readers' tactile responses on the text's manuscripts suggest that this contact is mutually transformative. The reader's body is remade through oral, visual, and tactile contact with the relic-like qualities of words, images, and books that make Mary present (recall II Prologue 1, 254-55). Yet the *Miracles*' readers also leave the traces of their bodily interaction on the manuscript, the smudges of their fingers or lips are marked on the page's surface. To seek contact with Mary in this way is also to ensure the continued transmission of the traces of the reader's own agency and body as an enduring part of the composite manuscript. Engaging with Mary's open, transmissible materiality in this tactile way suggests that the reader's presence also has the capacity to be extended and transmitted beyond the boundaries of his or her ordinary body.

This chapter began with a reflection on the fact that Mary lacks a corpse that might serve as a relic, and with the associated conception of her as physically absent from earth and resident in a heavenly elsewhere. Despite this, the *Miracles*, as I have demonstrated, insist upon Mary's presence in the world; this text continually reprises, reformulates, transforms, mediates, and brings into being Mary's presence in ways that depend on something other than just her body. Relics and reliquaries, the bodies of saints and of supplicants, images and words are all sacred entities, components of the ways in which Mary articulates herself, is made present, and forges local networks that make her available to the faithful. Throughout, I have underlined how these local networks of contact generate Mary's presence and agency as accessible to her devotees. This final section has further suggested that the *Miracles* asserts its own participation in the networks that bring Mary into being through contact, commemoration, communion, bodily and spiritual renewal, and that this participation is additionally extended to the text's faithful readers. Mary is continually re-actualised through text, book, and faithful reader, ensuring the transmission of her continued presence. Gautier's yearning for contact with Mary ultimately reveals the world and its inhabitants, human and nonhuman, organic and manmade, material and textual, as enduringly alive with sacred presence.

## Conclusion

Elements which are close when disconnected may be infinitely remote when their connections are analyzed; conversely, elements which would appear as infinitely distant may be close when their connections are brought back into the picture. I can be one metre away from someone in the next telephone booth and nevertheless be more closely connected to my mother 6000 miles away.

(Latour, 'On Actor-Network Theory', p. 371).

Latour deploys this evocative image of the connections generated through a telephone call to explain what he identifies as one of ANT's important contributions to the ways we understand the world: that questions of distance and proximity are not about geographic space, but about how *connected* entities are. Seen in terms of the connectivity of actor-networks, contact, proximity, and presence are generated not through location in physical space, but through the many connections linking entities together. Relics, this thesis has argued, offer a prime opportunity for dialogue with ANT precisely because they are so densely connected. Relics are formed by, circulate through, and forge networks linking together elements of all kinds: human and nonhuman; immaterial and material; absent and present entities; divine and earthly beings; texts, bodies, and things. Like Latour's telephone booth, relics, I have argued, generate forms of closeness and presence that can incorporate but are not solely dependent on physical proximity.

Just as hagiography is a genre that deploys and reformulates common tropes (from metaphors of saints as sacred treasures to a preoccupation with saintly bodies' wholeness or fragmentation), so too certain common threads have woven through my discussion in all four case studies. I have stressed how relics draw attention to their networked connections with other entities in order to make their sacredness visible or comprehensible. I have argued that the networks traced in all four chapters are concerned with how ordinary Christians can participate in sacred networks through their embodied gestures and responses. I have drawn particular attention to the ways in which hagiography and its manuscripts participate in the sacred networks they describe, blurring boundaries between text and object, intradiegetic and extradiegetic

sacred materiality. However, I have also stressed the need to attend to the particularities of each relic, saint, and cult, following the individual networks they trace. Questions about how the medieval cult of relics may have generated and communicated sacred presence cannot be adequately addressed through broad surveys alone. This is one area where my thesis has sought to make a contribution to existing research. Indeed, this thesis suggests that as well as seeking to establish common patterns we should also be concerned with how other connections may operate within this culture. To recall Latour's example of the telephone booth, it is one thing to identify the material infrastructure of the telephone network and another to attempt to describe the connections it is instrumental in making. That is to say, this thesis has attempted not only to identify the many entities that participate in relic networks (objects, people, texts, God), but to examine the nature of the specific connections these entities trace.

Each chapter has thus demonstrated how different types of relics explore different aspects of sacred networks. Chapter One examined Eloi's collecting of relic fragments, arguing that this collection establishes and communicates Eloi's sainthood by tracing networks materially connecting him with a multitude of sacred bodies, places, and things. Chapter Two explored Audrey and Edward's whole body relics, arguing that these bodies are productively disruptive, dynamic things that make visible a different set of networks forged through less tangible connections such as vision, desire, and knowledge. Chapter Three turned to Thomas Becket's blood relics, arguing that Becket's blood (and its representations in text, image, and artefacts) forges fluid, extended networks of sacred spaces and renegotiates both saint and pilgrim's bodily boundaries. Finally, Chapter Four argued that, despite Mary's absence of corporeal relics, she is repeatedly made present by a broad network that incorporates not only the contact relics, reliquaries, and artefacts within Gautier's *Miracles*, but also the text itself and its readers. When read as a whole, these case studies foreground the diversity of the connections medieval relics trace.

One thread that has recurred throughout the thesis is how thinking about relics calls attention to the particular agencies of nonhuman entities, from the miraculous transformations generated by sacred objects to the less overt forms of agency displayed by elements such as gold or parchment that produce responses to things, books, and texts. I have used ANT's focus on the agentic capacities of nonhuman, nonlinguistic, and spiritual beings to consider how we might approach

sacred artefacts and spiritual beings as something other than mere human projections. In this, I hope this thesis has served as a corrective to scholarly work that tends to privilege the human in dealing with medieval religious culture. My work suggests that the study of medieval relics may be considerably enriched by attending to the vital role of nonhuman agencies (both material and spiritual). Paying greater attention to such agencies might, I suggest, enable scholars to listen more fully to what medieval sources say about relics.

Moreover, I have argued that tracing the networks that form around medieval relics reveals the connectedness of the hagiography associated with them. In this sense, a focus on relics allows the connections of hagiography to be, as Latour might put it, 'brought back into the picture'. I have accordingly suggested that hagiography is a genre concerned with networks that incorporate not only texts, but also a diverse range of material and immaterial entities that may seem 'infinitely distant'. Hagiography is connected to bodies, places, things, and spiritual beings as well as people and other texts. Considering hagiography in terms of the networks in which it participates urges a rethinking of how the genre negotiates access to the sacred. A network perspective affirms that contact does not have to be about physical proximity, or even the physical mediation of that which is distant or absent. The texts I have studied do not really 'mediate' between past and present, proximate and distant, human and divine, absent and present; rather, they hold disparate elements together in a way that enables contact across time and space to take place. Instead of thinking in terms of mediation, I suggest we need to consider how hagiography is built on a model of presence and contact.

Indeed, vernacular hagiography, which is often composed, read, and circulated in contexts which are less obviously adjacent to the institutional cult centre of a relic than Latin hagiographic texts, makes these other, potentially nonhuman, immaterial connections all the more visible. In focusing on the French hagiographic tradition, I have therefore looked beyond human relationships – the patrons, institutions, owners, and communal contexts of texts and manuscripts – while not dismissing the importance of these elements for the networks in which this literature is implicated. I have sought to demonstrate how hagiography is embedded in heterogeneous networks of bodies, artefacts, and spaces that go beyond the more familiar social or textual networks to which hagiography scholars refer. My thesis proposes that an encounter with a hagiographic text is an encounter with one node in

a network. Thus, although my focus has been on texts, I also consider how the text might be decentred as a means of expressing and encountering saints. This approach opens up new ways of considering vernacular hagiography that move away from questions focused on textuality and representation and towards an appreciation of the text as materially, socially, and spiritually (as well as textually) connected. In order to fully account for the way hagiography works we have to think about it as a participant in a network that is not just about text, or indeed human cultural and historical contexts, but about the world of sacred material bodies and things.

Thinking about hagiography in these terms suggests new ways of exploring how the genre was experienced by medieval readers. My discussion has indicated that medieval encounters with hagiography are as much about contact and presence as they are about reading per se. Studies of the reception of medieval texts have often stressed the importance of communal, auditory experiences, as texts were read out loud with most of their audiences having no direct visual or tactile contact with the book.<sup>830</sup> While this auditory experience was undoubtedly an important way of accessing these texts for many of their medieval readers/listeners, there was also a concurrent desire among medieval readers for intimate tactile engagement with hagiographic books. This suggests that reading hagiography is as much about the manuscript's presence and contact with sacred objects as it is about purely visual or auditory encounters with the words of the text. As such, my work suggests that hagiography cannot fully be understood as a means to sacred encounter and devotional practice until attention is paid to a multisensory contact with books that includes, but that also ranges beyond, listening to the words of the text.

Indeed, this thesis contributes to a growing body of scholarship that calls for greater attention to be paid to medieval texts' materiality. I have argued that attending to medieval manuscripts' material features and qualities shows how otherwise mundane and common features of a codex can participate in conveying, transforming, and manifesting the sacred. My use of ANT has emphasised that these traits have a nonhuman agency of their own distinct from questions of the human intentionality of the scribe, illuminator, or artist. In Chapter One, for example, I explored how the extraction of images from the manuscript of Eloi's life inflects experiences of the manuscript as (mutilated, fragmented) material artefact, regardless

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<sup>830</sup> See for example Brian Stock, 'History, Literature, and Medieval Textuality', *Yale French Studies*, 70 (1986), 7-17 (p. 12).

of when or why this removal took place. Thus the important question to ask of manuscripts is not necessarily why an image was extracted or an illuminator used gold leaf, but what effect these elements might have in the world. As the example of *Elois's* manuscript suggests, exploring the agencies of medieval artefacts can not only reveal medieval conceptions of and responses to material things, but also foreground the ways these artefacts enduringly act across time, continuing to actively provoke responses from those who view and handle them, whether medieval devotees or modern scholars.

If this study has suggested new ways of approaching medieval hagiography as embedded in diverse networks, then it also has a contribution to make to more contemporary critical approaches to materiality. This includes the thinkers I have engaged with in my discussion – notably Latour, Bennett, and Brown – as well as the considerable volume of work that now exists in the fields they have contributed to founding and furthering. There are a range of critical theorisations that in different ways share a broad concern for reevaluating the relationship between humanity and the material world and asserting nonhuman agency. ANT, Bennett's *Vital Materialism*, and Brown's *Thing Theory* sit alongside other movements including Object-Oriented Ontology, as well as the work loosely grouped under the category of New Materialism(s).<sup>831</sup> In my engagement with some of this work, I have pointed to ways in which medieval hagiography can talk back to modern theories about material things. For example, in Chapter One I explored how Latour and Bennett's

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<sup>831</sup> Object-Oriented Ontology is associated in particular with the work of philosopher Graham Harman, see *Tool-Being: Heidegger and the Metaphysics of Objects* (Chicago: Open Court, 2002). Harman discusses the particular relationship between his Object-Oriented philosophy and Latour's ANT in *Prince of Networks: Bruno Latour and Metaphysics* (Pahran: Re.press, 2009). Object-Oriented Ontology participates in the broader philosophical movement of Speculative Realism, which is similarly concerned with re-evaluating the privilege of humanity in relation to the material world. For an overview of this movement and its related works, see Levi Bryant, Graham Harman, and Nick Srnicek, 'Towards a Speculative Philosophy', in *The Speculative Turn: Continental Materialism and Realism*, ed. by Levi Bryant, Graham Harman, and Nick Srnicek (Melbourne: Re.press, 2011), pp. 1-18. New Materialism(s), under which Bennett's work can be grouped, is a similarly diffuse movement that encompasses critical and philosophical studies engaging with a variety of disciplines, from science studies to feminist theory, for example see respectively Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); and Elizabeth Grosz, *Time Travels: Feminism, Nature, Power* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005). For an introduction to the movement's concerns, see Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, 'Introducing the New Materialisms', in *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*, ed. by Diana Coole and Samantha Frost (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), pp. 1-43.



thinking is often concerned with disrupting oppositions (between categories such as people and things, human subjects and inert objects) that were not necessarily important in the Middle Ages. As I argued, relics bring into focus how medieval hagiography is already alive to the alertness and agency of things that ANT and other Object-Oriented theories seek to uncover. Yet I also proposed that medieval conceptions of matter's agency retain a sense of a priori ontological hierarchy and human specificity that modern critical theorisations of materiality attempt to dismantle. In other words, medieval things suggest alternative ways of grasping the relationships between humanity and the material world that both chime with and resist modern theories, challenging any strict linear periodisation of premodern and modern conceptions of materiality. While conceptions of materiality are, as Latour points out, historically contingent, modern theories of materiality that attempt to define relationships between humans and the world are incomplete if they fail to take into account the vibrant things of the Middle Ages.

Moreover, the things I study also demonstrate the importance of accounting for sacred presence and spiritual agency in the world in theorisations of materiality. Medieval hagiography repeatedly emphasises that sacred presence is not an external addition or human projection onto the world, but an intrinsic, interconnected part of the world. As I explored in Chapter Four, in this hagiography corroborates the claims Latour makes in his most recent work in *Enquête* about the immanent (as opposed to transcendent) nature of religion and the necessity of taking spiritual beings as seriously as any other entity. Yet much Object-Oriented work – of which Bennett is a key example – neglects or indeed explicitly excludes the agency of spiritual beings in order to focus on matter.<sup>832</sup> For the medieval texts at the centre of this thesis, paying attention to the material world is bound up with seeking salvation and sacred contact. To neglect the sacred is to do an injustice to medieval things, as much as it would be to consider them as mere extensions of the human.

This thesis has thus suggested some ways in which medieval things might point to neglected areas of study in modern theorisations of materiality. Above all, however, by bringing medieval things into conversation with network theories, I have sought to offer fresh understandings of medieval relics and hagiography. If relics are, as I have argued, lively things that forge networks connecting sacred,

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<sup>832</sup> Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, pp. 16-17.

material, and human entities, then so too the hagiography that recounts them participates in these diverse sacred-material networks. The networks in and of hagiography generate forms of sacred contact and presence that hold out the potential for salvation and transformation to medieval readers. For the medieval faithful, to encounter hagiography is not only to read a devotional text, but to encounter a material world that is alive with interconnected sacred presence.

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